



The Right Reverend Father in GOD,
FRANCIS Bacon, Bishop of ROCHESTER
and DEAN of WESTMINSTER.

(1712 AD)

S E R M O N S
A N D
D I S C O U R S E S
O N S E V E R A L
S U B J E C T S
A N D
O C C A S I O N S.

B Y
F R A N C I S A T T E R B U R Y, D.D.
late Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER,
and Dean of WESTMINSTER.

VOL. I.

The FIFTH EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. WOODWARD, at the *Half-Moon*
between the *Temple-Gates*, *Fleet-Street*, and
C. DAVIS, in *Paternoſter-Row*.
MDCCXL.

1740

T O T H E
Right Reverend Father in God,
JONATHAN,
By Divine Permission,
Lord Bishop of *Winchester*,
A N D
Prelate of the Most Noble
Order of the GARTER.

May it please Your Lordship,

TO accept this Publick
Testimony of Gra-
titude from a Man
who stands indebted to Your
LORDSHIP for many Fa-
vours great in themselves, but

A 2 made

The Dedication.

made much greater by Your free and generous Manner of conferring them. For they were not the Effects of Importunity, or the just Rewards of Domestick Service; they sprang not from Dependence, or Acquaintance; being bestow'd on One, who was (at the first) little known to your Lordship, otherwise than by his honest Endeavours to retrieve those *Synodical Rights* of the Clergy, whereof You, my LORD, have been all along, to your great Honour, the avow'd Patron and Defender.

I mention not this Instance

The Dedication.

stance of Your LORDSHIP'S Goodness to Me, with any View of distinguishing myself from Others : For You have done nothing in My Case, but what You have frequently practis'd since the Time that Divine Providence, for the Good of this Church, rais'd You to the Episcopal Dignity; Nothing, but what hath been successively acknowledg'd by all Those who have prefix'd your Right Reverend Name to their Labours, from the Learned and Venerable Dr. *Pocock*, down to the mean Author of the following Ser-

The Dedication.

mons. And, while Your LORDSHIP continues to repeat the same ACTS of Generosity, You must be contented to receive the very same Acknowledgments ; since We, who share the Obligations, can scarce find a better Way of expressing our Thanks and doing Justice to Your Character, than by informing the World, Why, and How they were deriv'd to us.

The Secrecy, with which Wise Statesmen conduct their Designs for the Publick Good, so as that the Execution alone shall make the Dis-

The Dedication.

Discovery, hath by Your LORDSHIP been as carefully observ'd in Your Private Schemes of Beneficence; which have seldom appear'd till they took Effect, and surpriz'd even Those, who were most nearly interested in the Success of them. By this means, You have, after the best manner, forbidden all Applications, by rendering them, not only unnecessary, but impracticable; and have enjoy'd to the utmost both the Honour, and the Pleasure of well-doing.

Indeed, there is scarce any Virtue, which either dif-

The Dedication.

poses the Mind to deserve well of Others, or adds Comeliness and Grace to deserving Actions, that doth not manifestly appear and shine in Your LORDSHIP : And by these Recommending Circumstances, You engage the very Hearts of those You Oblige, and double the Value of every Kindness You do to them.

To give, *hoping* (and looking) *for nothing again*, is the Gospel-Rule of Beneficence ; and Your LORDSHIP hath strictly observ'd it. For none of your Gifts have been clogg'd with Conditions ;

The Dedication.

ditions ; You have expect-ed no Returns, but what every one, who hath a thankful Mind, and a just Sense of his Duty, would even choose and delight to pay : You have aim'd only at doing as became You in Your high Station ; and when Those, whom You advanc'd, did likewise as became them in *Their* Stations, your Desires were answer'd, and You had your Reward.

It is well known, with what Courtesy and Ease You have always treated Those, whom You have once oblig'd ; on that very Account

The Dedication.

Account they were sure of having a nearer and freer Access to Your LORDSHIP, instead of being kept to the Usual Terms of Distance and Dependence. You have been so far from ever putting any Man in Mind of what You have done for him, that You would never bear to be put in mind of it Yourself; and have not been more careful to prevent Solicitations, than to avoid Acknowledgments. You had the Thanks of Your Own Conscience, and You neither needed, nor desir'd any other.

It

The Dedication.

It is the peculiar Happiness of those Persons, on whom Your Favours are plac'd; that they receive them from an Hand eminent for its great and lasting Services to our Church and Constitution. For there are, I think, no Enemies whatsoever, either of her Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship, (either within Doors, or without) but what Your L O R D S H I P hath, in the Course of your Episcopal Government, withstood, and baffled.

You were one of those *Seven Prelates*, (worthy of honour-

The Dedication.

honourable Remembrance) who gave the most Effectual Check to the Attempts of *Papery* in a late Reign, and preserv'd the pure Profession of Christianity among us by the same Suffering Methods, by which it was at first propagated. It can never be forgotten, with what a true Christian Spirit (such as animated the chief Pastors of the Church, in those Days, when Episcopacy was a certain Step to Martyrdom) You stood forth, and offer'd yourself willingly to witness a good Confession; how solicitous You were

The Dedication.

were, lest the *Tower-Gates* should have been shut upon those Excellent Persons, ere Your Distance would permit You to accompany them in their glorious Confinement ; to partake of which, You made as much Haste, as some Men afterwards did, to draw the Advantages of it to themselves, under a new Turn of Affairs.

When that happen'd, New Occasions also of serving the Church, offer'd themselves to Your Lordship, which You as readily embrac'd. The Fatherly Vigilance, and Exemplary Firmness

The Dedication.

ness you then shew'd in frustrating the Methods made Use of to perpetuate *Schism*, by unauthoriz'd *Schools* and *Seminaries*, were observ'd with Pleasure, and own'd with Thanks by All that wish'd well to our Establishment. Nor could they, who wish'd ill to it, justly blame an Endeavour of securing to the *Ordinary* that Power, which he always enjoy'd, and of which he is not yet divested ; and of confining a Legal Indulgence within the Bounds prescrib'd by that Law, which gave Birth to it.

Shall

The Dedication.

Shall I take notice here,
of the Seasonable and Libe-
ral Encouragements You
reach'd out to a Worthy
Presbyter of this Church,
who repress'd the bold At-
tempts of *Sectaries* by his
Learned and Accurate Wri-
tings? It may, I think, be-
come me to mention even
this particular Act of Your
Bounty, since it had a Ge-
neral Aim and Influence,
and was not terminated in
the *Person*, how deserving
soever, but in the Righte-
ous *Cause* which he espous'd;
and which, as Your LORD-
SHIP's fix'd Judgment leads
You

The Dedication.

You, by all Lawful Means to support, so your Temper inclines You rather to promote by Rewards than Punishments.

The Fears of Popery were scarce remov'd, when *Heresy* began to diffuse its Venom; and the sacred Mysterious of our Faith were, after a daring and petulant manner, expos'd to publick Scorn, even in one of those famous *Seats of Knowledge*, which then were, and still are, the chief Bulwarks of true Religion. It pleas'd God, that You were now possess'd of a *See*, which gave You

The Dedication.

You Power to Visit and Correct such Enormities ; and You exerted that Power with Zeal and Vigour ; driving out from the Schools of Learning a Disciple of *Arius*, who had all the Craft and Obstinacy of his Master, and the good Luck, for some time, to be as well Supported. The Prosecution of this Cause was attended with so many Difficulties, as would have shaken a Resolution less firm than Your LORDSHIP's. But the Discharge of Your great Trust, and the Mainten-

a ance

The Dedication.

ance of God's Truth, were the Springs which had set You on work ; and They who act upon such Principles, can never be discourag'd.

The Issue of that memorable Struggle, as it was of great Advantage to the Church, and the Universities, in Other Respects, so particularly in This, that it fix'd the Power of *Visitors* (not till then acknowledg'd Final) upon the sure Foundation of a *Judgment* in *Parliament* ; and, by that means, made so effectual

The Dedication.

effectual a Provision for the future Quiet of those Learned Bodies, as may be reckon'd equal to the greatest Benefactions.

This, and another Parliamentary Decision, which Your LORDSHIP, not long after, with equal Difficulty, obtain'd ; and by which the *Bishop's* sole Right to judge of the *Qualifications* of *Persons* applying for *Institution*, was unalterably confirm'd ; are such Instances of Your Magnanimity, and Publick Spirit, as will remain in Memory, while the

The Dedication.

Church or the Law of *England* lasts. For they were not Temporary Services, to be made use of, and talk'd of for a while, and then forgotten ; but (as the Historian truly said of his own Writings) *Perpetual Acquisitions*, laid up for the Benefit of succeeding Ages. And He who contends for Common Rights, with Lower Aims than these, means not the Constitution, but Himself ; and deserves not the Applause even of his Own Times, when he is not disinterested enough to look beyond them.

It

The Dedication.

It was the Sense of these Important Services, already done by Your LORDSHIP, that occasion'd a general Joy among good Men, when they heard of Your intended Translation to the See of *Winchester*. Particularly, the Clergy of that Diocese, and the University of *Oxford*, who were chiefly concern'd in the Consequences of Your Promotion, receiv'd the first Accounts of it with the greatest Satisfaction, and were in Pain, while the Event was suspended---A Suspence which we may presume design'd to

The Dedication.

do Honour to Your LORDSHIP, and to justify the Wisdom of Her Majesty's Choice; since it tended to shew how impatiently You were expccted, and desir'd, by Those who were to be under Your Inspection and Authority.

Among all the Learned Bodies, whose Hopes and Fears were then in greatest Agitation, None was more (or with more Reason) solicitous than that *House*, which had the Honour of Educating Your LORDSHIP, and instilling into Your Mind those

The Dedication.

those Principles, which who-
ever hath once imbib'd, sel-
dom forsakes ; and whoso-
ever forsakes not, must im-
moveably adhere to the true
Interests of the Church, and
Monarchy. Whilst that
fruitful Parent thus trains
up her Children, She is se-
cure of Protection and Fa-
vour from Your LORDSHIP,
or from Whoever else He
be, that hath not been with-
held from doing Good to
her, in Evil Days, by ma-
licious and groundless Clam-
ours. Under Your and
Their Shadow She hath *rest-
ed at Noon*, when the Heat

The Dedication.

was most intense and scorching : She hath flourish'd hitherto, and will, I doubt not, still continue to flourish, tho' Her Enemies be Many and Mighty, and daily *shoot out their Arrows against her, even bitter Words.* She looks upon your LORDSHIP's Advancement, as a sure Token, that Divine Providence is still propitious to Her ; and, encourag'd by this Prospect, She is ready to take up her Parable, and say : *Joseph is a fruitful Bough, even a fruitful Bough by a Well, whose Branches run over*

The Dedication.

over the Wall. The Archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his Bow abode in Strength, and the Arms of his Hands were made strong by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

In the Names of These, and of all Other the true Friends and Sons of the Church, permit me, MY LORD, to congratulate Your Accession to a See, which will afford You such a Sphere of Action as You were made to fill; which will furnish You

The Dedication.

You with many welcome Opportunities of doing Good, of rewarding Merit of cherishing Piety and Virtue, of encouraging Persons, distinguish'd by their Learning, their undaunted Assertion of Divine Truths, and undissembled Zeal for our admirable Constitution in Church and State ; which will, in short, enable You to carry on all those Excellent Designs, to which Your Upright and Bountiful Heart is religiously inclin'd.

What may We not promise ourselves from the Influence of your LORDSHIP'S Conduct

The Dedication.

Conduct in so Eminent a Station? from Your known Courage and Fervency in the Cause of God, and his Church? from the Greatness of Your Mind, the Goodness of Your Intentions, and the Soundness of Your Principles? from that Habitual Love of *Worthy Deeds*, which You contracted so early, and have by long Practice confirm'd? and from your Experience of the Success that hath attended You in all You have suffer'd, or done for the Publick?

By Your L O R D S H I P ' s
Means,

The Dedication.

Means, and within the Circle of your Power, we doubt not but to see all proper Steps taken towards reviving decay'd Discipline; and restoring Church-Censures to their due Force and Credit; towards detecting and defeating Clandestine Simoniacal Contracts; towards securing the Rights and Revenues of the Clergy from Encroachments, rescuing their Persons and sacred Function from Contempt, and freeing Religion itself from the Insults now made upon it by Blasphemous Tongues, and Pens, with equal Boldness and Impunity. These

The Dedication.

These, MY LORD, are the Expectations with which the best Men are now entertaining themselves, and which You are hastening to make good. The Actions of the past Years of Your Life are a sure Earnest and Pledge of what those to come will produce ; and the bright Example You have set long ago to Yourself and to Others, shall grow brighter in Proportion to Your Power and Opportunities : for *the Path of the Just is as the Shining Light, that shineth more and more unto a perfect Day.*

The

The Dedication.

The great Honours and Revenues, still annex'd to some few Stations in the Church, are the chief Mark which Impiety, Envy, and Sacrilege aim at ; and much they have to say, why Religion should be stripp'd of these superfluous and unprofitable Ornaments. But Malice itself is disarm'd, and all Objections are silenc'd, when those Rewards are bestow'd on Men, who, by their Birth, and Virtues, and Experience, are every way qualify'd for them ; whose Hereditary Fortunes, and Noble

The Dedication.

Noble Natures, set them above all mean Designs of diverting the Patrimony of the Church to improper Uses; and who are ready therefore to reflect back upon Religion the Advantages they derive from thence, and to abound in all the Offices of Hospitality and Charity, in proportion to what they enjoy. I need not say, how far these Excellent Qualities belong to Your LORDSHIP, and are a confess'd Part of your Character.

When we compare the Good which You have done,
My

The Dedication.

MY LORD, with that which You have receiv'd, it brings to mind the Apposite Passage of the Prophet : *The Liberal deviseth Liberal Things, and by Liberal Things shall he be establish'd.* Your LORDSHIP is an Illustrious Instance of this Truth ; for the Blessings You have so plentifully scatter'd on those beneath You, have been multiply'd on Your own Head from above ; and You have reap'd the Benefits of a most generous and firm Friendship, in like Manner as You sow'd them. *You have given, MY LORD, and it hath*

The Dedication.

*hath been given unto You ;
good Measure, pressed down,
shaken together, and run-
ning over : for with the same
Measure, which You meted
withal, hath it been (and
may it ever be) measured to
you again.*

Your Happiness, MY
LORD, is now as compleat
as all the Prosperous Cir-
cumstances of Life can make
it; and your Private Dome-
stick Felicities (a Case rarely
known) are no ways inferior
to those of a more Publick
and Splendid Nature. For
You are happy in the best
of *Ladies*, as She is in the
b Tcnder-

The Dedication.

Tenderest of Husbands; You have the best of *Brothers*, and the best of *Children*; those *Arrows in the Hand of the Mighty Man*, which are both his Ornament and Defence: God be thanked your *Quiver is full of them!* And *He* amongst them, who is to inherit Your Ample Fortunes, doth, by his Early Love of Learning, and most Virtuous Disposition, promise, that he will one day do Honour even to that Honourable Stock from which he springs.

With such a Variety of Blessings hath God surrounded

The Dedication.

ed You ! and, that nothing may be wanting, he hath bless'd You likewise with a Heart and Skill to use them. May You, thro' his Goodness, enjoy an uninterrupted Continuance of them ; and such a Length of Days, as will give You Room to improve them to the utmost, for His Glory and the Publick Benefit.

This, MY LORD, is the Unanimous Wish of all that have been oblig'd by You, of all that Honour You ; that is, of all that truly Know You ; but of none more than Him, who now offers these

The Dedication.

*Sermons to Your LORDSHIP,
and, with that Sincerity
which becomes a Preacher of
Divine Truth, professes him-
self to be, by all the Tyes
of Esteem and Duty, Grati-
tude and Inclination,*

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most Devoted, and

Ever Faithful Servant,

Fr. ATTERBURY.

T H E

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.

PSAL. I. 14.

OFFER unto GOD Thanksgiving.
Page 1

SERMON II.

The Power of Charity to cover Sin.

1 PET. IV. 8.

Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.

37

CONTENTS.

SERMONS III, IV.

The Miraculous Propagation of the
Gospel.

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A little One shall become a Thousand ;
and a Small One a strong Nation :
I the Lord will baste it in his
time.* 88

SERMON V.

A Scowler incapable of True Wisdom.

PROV. xiv. 6.

*A Scowler seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it
not.* 171

SERMON VI.

A Discourse occasioned by the Death of
the Lady Cutts.

ECCLES. vii. 2.

*It is better to go to the House of Mourning,
than to go to the House of Feasting :*

CONTENTS.

*ing : for that is the End of all Men, and
the Living will lay it to Heart.* 203

SERMON VII.

The Wisdom of Providence manifested in
in the Revolutions of Government.

EZEK. xxxvii. 3.

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can these
Bones live? And I answered, O Lord
God, Thou knowest.* 243

SERMON VIII.

The Duty of Publick Intercession and
Thanksgiving for Princes.

1 TIM. ii. 1, 2, 3.

*I exhort, that first of all Supplications,
Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of
Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings,
and all that are in Authority; that
We may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life,
in all Godliness and Honesty: For this
is Good and Acceptable in the Sight of
God our Saviour.* 277

CONTENTS.

SERMON IX.

The Rule of Doing as we would be Done unto, explain'd.

St. MATTH. vii. 12.

All things, whatsoever Ye would that Men should do unto You, do ye even so unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. 311

SERMON X.

Of Religious Retirement.

St. MATTH. xiv. 23.

When he had sent the Multitude away, he went up into a Mountain, apart, to Pray. 347

The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T

W H I T E - H A L L,

M A Y 29, 1692.

P S A L M L. 14.

Offer unto God Thanksgiving.

A MONG the many Excellent S E R M. cies of this pious Collection of I. Hymns, for which so particular a Value hath been set upon it by the Church of God in all Ages, this is not the

SER.M. the least, that the true Price of Duties is

1. there justly stated ; Men are call'd off
 from resting in the outward Shew of Religion, in Ceremonies and Ritual Observances ; and taught rather to practise (that which was shadowed out by these Rites, and to which they are design'd to lead) sound inward Virtue and Piety.

The several Composers of these Hymns were *Prophets* ; Persons, whose Business it was, not only to foretel Events, for the Benefit of the Church in succeeding Times, but to correct and reform also what was amiss in that Race of Men, with whom they liv'd and convers'd ; to preserve a foolish People from Idolatry, and false Worship ; to rescue the Law from corrupt Glosses, and superstitious Abuses ; and to put Men in mind of (what they were so willing to forget) that Eternal and Invariable Rule, which was before these *Positive* Duties, would continue after them, and was to be observed, even Then, in preference to them.

The

The Discharge, I say, of this part of s E R M. the Prophetick Office taking up so much room in the Book of *Psalms*; this hath been one Reason, among many others, why they have been always so highly esteem'd; because we are from hence furnished with a proper Reply to an Argument commonly made use of by Unbelievers; who look upon all reveal'd Religions, as Pious Frauds, and Impostures, on the Account of the Prejudices they have entertain'd in relation to That of the Jews: The whole of which they first suppose to lie in External Performances, and then easily persuade themselves, that God could never be the Author of such a mere Piece of Pageantry, and empty Formality, nor delight in a Worship which consisted purely in a Number of odd unaccountable Ceremonies. Which Objection of theirs we should not be able thoroughly to answer, unless we could prove (chiefly out of the *Psalms*, and other Parts of the Prophetick Writings) that the Jewish Religion was somewhat more than bare Outside and

The Duty of

S E R M. and Shew ; and that Inward Purity, and

1. the Devotion of the Heart was a Duty

Then, as well as Now. One great Instance of this Proof we have in the Words now before us ; which are taken from a Psalm of *Ajaph*, written on purpose to set out the Weakness and Worthlessness of External Performances, when compared with more Substantial and Vital Duties. To enforce which Doctrine, God himself is brought in, as delivering it. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against thee : I am God, even thy God.* The Preface is very solemn ; and therefore what it ushers in, we may be sure, is of no common Importance : *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not so reprove thee for any Failures in thy Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, as if These were the Only, or the Chief Things I required of thee. *I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-goat out of thy Folds.* I prescribed not Sacrifices to thee, for my own sake, because

Praise and Thanksgiving.

5

because I needed them: *For evry Beast s E R M.
of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle up- I.
on a thousand Hills.* Mine they are, and were, before ever I commanded thee to offer them to Me; so that (as it follows) *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell thee; for the World is Mine, and the Fullness thereof.* But can ye be so gross and senseless, as to think me liable to Hunger and Thirst? as to imagine that Wants of that kind can touch me? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* — Thus doth he expostulate severely with them, after the most graceful manner of the Eastern Poetry. The Issue of which is, a plain and full Resolution of the Case, in those few Words of the Text. — *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Would you do your Homage the most agreeable Way? would you render the most acceptable of Services? *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*

The Use I intend to make of these Words, is, from hence to raise some Thoughts about that very excellent and important Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving;

SER M. giving : A Subject, not unfit to be dis-
 cussed at this Time ; whether we
 consider, either the more than ordinary
 Coldness that appears of late in Mens
 Tempers towards the Practice of this
 (or any other) Part of a warm and affec-
 ting Devotion ; the Great Occasion of
 setting aside this particular Day in the
 Calendar, some Years ago ; or the New
 Instances of Mercy and Goodness, which
 God hath lately been pleas'd to bestow
 upon us : answering at last the many
Prayers and *Fastings*, by which we have
 besought him so long for the Establish-
 ment of their Majesties Throne, and for
 the Success of their Arms ; and giving
 us, in his own good Time, an Oppor-
 tunity of appearing before him in the
 more delightful Part of our Duty, *with*
the Voice of Joy and Praise, with a Mul-
titude that keep Holy-days.

Psal. xlvi.

4.

Offer unto God Thanksgiving --- Which
 that we may do, let us enquire first, how
 we are to *Understand* this Command of
 Offering Praise and Thanksgiving unto
 God :

God ; and then how *Reasonable* it is that s E R M.
we should comply with it.

I.

Our Enquiry into what is *meant* here,
will be very short : For who is there,
that understands any thing of Religion
but knows, that the offering Praise and
Thanks to God implies, our having a lively
and devout Sense of his Excellencies,
and of his Benefits ; our recollecting them
with Humility and Thankfulness of heart ;
and our expressing these inward Affections
by suitable outward Signs ; by reverent
and lowly Postures of Body, by Songs,
and Hymns, and Spiritual Ejaculations ;
either Privately, or Publickly ; either in
the Cuslomary and Daily Service of the
Church, or in its more solemn Assemblies,
convened upon Extraordinary Occasions ? This is the Account, which
every Christian easily gives himself of it ;
and which, therefore, it would be needless
to enlarge upon. I shall only take
notice on this Head, That Praise and
Thanksgiving do, in Strictness of Speech,
signify things somewhat different. Our

Praise

S E R M. *Praise* properly terminates in God, on the account of his natural Excellencies and Perfections; and is that Act of Devotion by which we confess and admire his several Attributes: But *Thanksgiving* is a narrower Duty, and imports only a grateful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Mercies. We praise God for all his glorious Acts, of every kind, that regard either Us, or Other Men; for his very *Vengeance*, and those *Judgments* which he sometimes sends *abroad in the Earth*; But we thank him (properly speaking) for the Instances of his *Goodness* alone; and for such only of these, as We ourselves are some way concern'd in. This, I say, is what the two Words strictly imply: But since the Language of Scripture is generally less exact, and useth Either of them often to express the Other by, I shall not think myself oblig'd, in what follows, thus nicely always to distinguish them.

Now the great *Reasonableness* of this Duty of Praise or Thanksgiving, and our several *Obligations* to it, will appear; if

we either consider it *absolutely* in itself, s E R M ·
as the Debt of our Natures; or compare ^{I.}
it with other Duties, and shew the Rank
it bears among them; or set out, in the
last place, some of its peculiar *Properties*
and *Advantages*, with regard to the de-
vout Performer of it.

I. The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving, considered *absolutely* in it self, is, I say, the Debt, and Law of our Nature. We had such Faculties bestowed on us by our Creator, as made us capable of satisfying this Debt, and obeying this Law; and they never, therefore, work more naturally and freely, than when they are thus employed.

'Tis one of the earliest Instructions given us by Philosophy, and which hath ever since been approved and inculcated by the wisest Men of all Ages, That the Original Design of making Man was, that he might Praise and Honour Him who made him. When God had finished this goodly Frame of Things, we call *the World*, and put together the several

S E R M. Parts of it, according to his infinite Wisdom, in exact Number, Weight, and Measure ; there was still wanting a Creature in these lower Regions, that could apprehend the Beauty, Order, and exquisite Contrivance of it ; that from contemplating the Gift, might be able to raise itself up to the great Giver, and do Honour to all his Attributes. Every thing indeed that God made, did, in some Sense, glorify its Author, inasmuch as it carried upon it the plain Mark and Impress of the Deity, and was an Effect worthy of that first Cause from whence it flow'd ; and Thus might the *Heavens* be said, at the first Moment in which
Phil.xix.1. they stood forth, *to declare his Glory, and the Firmament to shew his Handy-work* : But this was an imperfect, and defective Glory ; the Sign was of no Signification here below, whilst there was no one here as yet to take Notice of it. Man, therefore, was formed to supply this Want ; endued with Powers fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unlimited Perfections ; and then put into this Temple

ple of God, this lower World, as the s E R M.
Priest of Nature, to offer up the Incense ^{1.}
of Thanks and Praise for the mute and the 
insensible Part of the Creation.

This, I say, hath been the Opinion all along of the most thoughtful Men, down from the most ancient Times: And tho' it be not Demonstrative, yet is it what we cannot but judge highly reasonable, if we do but allow, that Man was made for some End or other, and that he is capable of perceiving that End. For then, let us search and enquire never so much, we shall find no Other Account of him that we can rest upon so well. If we say, That he was made purely for the good Pleasure of God; this is, in effect, to say, that he was made for no Determinate End; or for none, at least, that We can discern. If we say, That he was designed as an Instance of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of God; this indeed may be the Reason of his *Being* in general; . for 'tis the common Reason of the Being of every Thing besides. But it gives no Account, why he was

S E R M. made *such* a Being as he is, a reflecting,
 1. thoughtful, inquisitive Being : The parti-
 cular Reason of this seems most aptly to
 be drawn from the Praise and Honour that
 was (not only to redound to God from
 him, but) to be given to God by him.

This Duty, therefore, is the Debt and Law of our Nature. And it will more distinctly appear to be such, if we consider the two Ruling Faculties of our Mind, the *Understanding* and the *Will*, apart; in both which it is deeply founded: In the Understanding, as in the Principle of Reason, which owns and acknowledges it; in the Will, as in the Fountain of Gratitude and Return, which prompts, and even constrains us to pay it.

Reason was given us as a Rule and Measure, by the Help of which we were to proportion our Esteem of every thing, according to the Degrees of Perfection and Goodness which we found therein. It cannot, therefore, if it doth its Office at all, but apprehend God as the best and most perfect Being; it must needs see, and own, and admire his infinite Perfections.

fections. And this is what is strictly s E R M. meant by *Praise*; which, therefore, is expressed in Scripture by *confessing* to God, and *acknowledging* him; by *ascribing* to him what is his due; and, as far as This Sense of the Words reaches, 'tis impossible to *think* of God without praising him. For it depends not on the Understanding how it shall apprehend Things, any more than it doth on the Eye, how Visible Objects shall appear to it.

The Duty takes the farther and surer Hold of us, by the Means of our *Will*, and that strong Bent towards *Gratitude* which the Author of our Nature hath implanted in it. There is not a more active Principle than this in the Mind of Man; and surely, that which deserves its utmost Force, and should set all its Springs a-work, is God; the Great and Universal Benefactor, from whom alone we received whatever we either have, or are, and to whom we can possibly repay nothing but our Praises, or (to speak more properly on this Head, and according to the strict Import of the Word)

S E R M. our Thanksgivings. *Who bath first given*

*I. to God, (saith the great Apostle in his
usual Figure) and it shall be recompensed
unto him again? A Gift, it seems, al-
ways requires a Recompence: Nay, but
of him, and through him, and to him are
all things; Of him, as the Author; Thro'
him, as the Preserver and Governor; To
him, as the End and Perfection of all
Things: To whom, therefore, (as it fol-
lows) be Glory for ever, Amen!*

Gratitude consists in an equal Return of Benefits, if we are able; or of Thanks, if we are not: Which Thanks, therefore, must rise always in Proportion as the Favours receiv'd are great, and the Receiver incapable of making any other Sort of Requital. Now, since no Man hath benefited God at any Time, and yet every Man, in each Moment of his Life, is continually benefited by him, what strong Obligations must we needs be under to Thank him? 'Tis true, our Thanks are really as insignificant to him, as any other Kind of Return would be; in them-selves indeed, they are worthless; but his

Good-

Goodness hath put a Value upon them : S E R M.
He hath declared, he will accept them in
lieu of the vast Debt we owe : and, after
that, which is fittest for us, to dispute
how they come to be taken as an *Equi-*
valent, or to pay them ?

I.
~~~~~

It is, therefore, the Voice of Nature  
(as far as Gratitude itself is so) that the  
Good Things we receive from above,  
should be sent back again thither in  
Thank- and Praises, *as the Rivers run* Eccles. 7.  
*into the Sea ; to the Place* (the Ocean of  
Beneficence) *from whence the Rivers come,*  
*thither should they return again.*

II. We have considered the Duty II.  
*absolutely*; we are now to *compare* it  
with others, and to see what Rank it  
bears among them. And here we shall  
find, that, among all the Acts of Reli-  
gion, immediately addressed to God, This  
is much the Noblest, and most Excellent ;  
as it must needs be, if what hath been laid  
down be allowed, that the End of Man's  
Creation was, to praise and glorify God.  
For That cannot but be the most noble

S E R M. and excellent Act of any Being, which

I. best answers the End and Design of it.

Other Parts of Devotion, such as *Confession* and *Prayer*, seem not Originally to have been designed for Man, nor Man for them. They imply *Guilt*, and *Want*, with which the *State of Innocence* was not acquainted. Had Man continued in that Estate, his Worship (like the Devotions of Angels) had been paid to Heaven in pure Acts of Thanksgiving; and nothing had been left for him to do, beyond the enjoying the good Things of Life, as Nature directed, and praising the God of Nature who bestowed them. But being fallen from Innocence, and Abundance; having contracted Guilt, and forfeited his Right to all Sorts of Mercies; Prayer and Confession became necessary for a time, to retrieve the Loss, and restore him to that State, wherein he should be able to live without them. These are fitted, therefore, for a lower Dispensation; before which, in Paradise, there was nothing but Praise, and after which, there shall be nothing but that,

in

in Heaven. Our perfect State did at first, ~~S.E.R.M.~~,  
and will at last consist in the Performance <sup>1.</sup>.  
of this Duty ; and herein, therefore, lies ~~the~~ <sup>2.</sup>  
the Excellence and the Honour of our  
Nature.

'Tis the same way of Reasoning, by  
which the Apostle hath given the Prefe-  
rence to Charity, beyond Faith, and  
Hope, and every Spiritual Gift. *Charity*: Cor xiii.  
*never faileth*, saith he; meaning, that it  
is not a Virtue useful only in this Life,  
but will accompany us also into the  
Next: *But whether there be Prophefies*,  
*they shall fail*; *whether there be Tongues*,  
*they shall cease*; *whether there be Know-*  
*ledge, it shall vanish away*: These are Gifts  
of a Temporary Advantage, and shall all  
perish in the using. *For we know in part*, Ver. 9.  
*and we prophefy in part*: Our present State  
is imperfect; and, therefore, what belongs  
to That, and only That, must be imper-  
fect too. *But when that which is Perfect* Ver. 10.  
*is come, then that which is in Part shall*  
*be done away*. The Argument of St. Paul,  
we see, which sets Charity above the  
rest of Christian Graces, will give Praise  
also

S E R M. also the Pre-eminence over all the Parts  
 I. of Christian Worship ; and we may con-  
 clude Our reasoning, therefore, as He  
 doth his : *And now abideth Confession,*  
*Prayer, and Praise, these three; but the*  
*greatest of these is Praise.*

It is so, certainly, on other Accounts,  
 as well as this ; particularly, as it is the  
 most *disinterested* Branch of our Religi-  
 ous Service ; such as hath the most of  
 God, and the least of our Selves in it, of  
 any we pay ; and therefore approaches  
 the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and  
 perfect Act of Homage. For though a  
 good Action doth not grow immediately  
 worthless by being done with the Pro-  
 spect of Advantage, as some have strange-  
 ly imagin'd ; yet it will be allow'd, I  
 suppose, that its being done without the  
 Mixture of that End, or with as little of  
 it as is possible, recommends it so much  
 the more, and raises the Price of it. *Doth*  
 Job 1. 9. *Job fear God for nought?* was an Objec-  
 tion of Satan ; which implied, that those  
 Duties were most valuable, where our  
 own Interest was least aim'd at : And  
 God

God seems, by the Commission he then s E R M. gave Satan to try Experiments upon *Job*, <sup>I.</sup> thus far to have allow'd his Plea. Now  our Requests for future, and even our Acknowledgments of past Mercies, center purely in our selves, our own Interest is the direct Aim of them. But Praise is a generous and unmercenary Principle, which proposes no other End to itself, but to do, as is fit for a Creature endow'd with such Faculties to do, towards the most perfect and beneficent of Beings; and to pay the willing Tribute of Honour there, where the Voice of Reason directs us to pay it. God hath indeed annex'd a Blessing to the Duty, and when we know this, we cannot chuse, while we are performing the Duty, but have some Regard to the Blessing which belongs to it. However, that is not the direct Aim of our Devotions, nor was it the first Motive that stirr'd us up to them. Had it been so, we should naturally have betaken our selves to Prayer, and breath'd out our Desires in That Form wherein they are most properly convey'd.

In

~~SER.M.~~ In short, Praise is our most excellent Work, a Work common to the Church Triumphant and Militant, and which lifts us up into a Communion and Fellowship with Angels. The Matter, about which it is conversant, is always the Perfections of God's Nature; and the Act itself is the Perfection of Ours.

III. I come now, in the last Place, to set out some of its peculiar *Properties and Advantages*, which recommend it to the Devout Performer. And,

~~W EXLVII.~~ 1<sup>st</sup>, It is the most *pleasing* Part of our Devotions. It proceeds always from a Lively, Cheerful Temper of Mind; and it cherishes and improves what it proceeds from. *For it is good to sing Praises unto our God*, (says one, whose Experience, in this Case, we may rely upon) *for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely*. Petition and Confession are the Language of the Indigent and the Guilty, the Breathing of a sad and a contrite Spirit: *Is any afflicted? Let him pray: But*,

is any merry? Let him sing Psalms. The s E R M .  
most usual and natural way of Mens 1.  
expressing the Mirth of their Hearts,   
is, in a Song; and Songs are the very-  
Language of Praise; to the expressing  
of which they are in a peculiar man-  
ner appropriated, and are scarce of any  
other Use in Religion. Indeed, the whole  
Composition of this Duty is such, as  
throughout speaks Ease and Delight to  
the Mind: It proceeds from *Love*, and  
from *Thankfulness*; from *Love*, the Foun-  
tain of Pleasure, the Passion, which gives  
every Thing we do, or enjoy, its Relish  
and Agreeableness. From *Thankfulness*,  
which involves in it the Memory of  
past Benefits; the actual Presence of  
them to the Mind, and the repeated En-  
joyment of them. And as its *Principle*  
is, such is its *End* also. For it procur-  
eth Quiet and Ease to the Mind, by do-  
ing somewhat towards satisfying that  
Debt which it labours under; by deli-  
vering it of those Thoughts of Praise and  
Gratitude, those Exultations it is so full  
of; and which would grow uneasy and  
trouble-

S E R M. troublesome to it, if they were kept in.

1. If the Thankful *refrained*, it would be  
*Pain and Grief to them*: But then, then  
 Ps. lxiii. 5 is their Soul satisfied as with Marrow  
 and Fatness, when their Mouth praiseth  
 God with Joyful Lips.

2. It is another distinguishing Property of Divine Praise, that it enlargeth the Powers and Capacities of our Souls; turning them from little and low Things, upon their Greatest and Noblest Objects, the Divine Nature; and employing them in the Discovery and Admiration of those several Perfections that adorn it. We see, what Difference there is between Man and Man; such, as there is hardly greater between Man and Beast: And this proceeds chiefly from the different Sphere of Thought which they act in, and the different Objects they converse with. The Mind is essentially the same in the Peasant and the Prince; the Forces of it naturally equal in the untaught Man, and the Philosopher: Only the One of these is busied in mean Affairs, and within nar-

nower

rower Bounds, the Other exercises him-<sup>s E R M.</sup> self in things of Weight and Moment; <sup>I.</sup> and This it is that puts the wide Distance  between them. Noble Objects are to the Mind, what the Sun-Beams are to a Bud or Flower: They open and unfold, as it were, the Leaves of it; put it upon exerting and spreading it self every way; and call forth all those Powers, that lie hid and lock'd up in it. The Praise and Admiration of God, therefore, brings this Advantage along with it, that it sets our Faculties upon their full Stretch, and improves them to all the Degrees of Perfection, of which they are capable.

3. It, farther, promotes in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and an high Indignation of Mind at every thing that openly profanes it. For what we value and delight in, we cannot with Patience hear slighted, or abused. Our Own Praises, which we are constantly putting up, will be a *Spur* to us toward procuring and promoting the Divine Glory in every Other Instance; and will

SER'M. make us set our Faces against all open  
 I. and avowed Impieties. Which, me-  
 ~~~ thinks, should be considered a little by  
 such as would be thought not to be
 wanting in this Duty, and yet are often
 silent under the foulest Dishonours done
 to Religion, and its great Author. For
 tamely to hear God's Name and Worship
 vilified by Others, is no very good Ar-
 gument, that we have been us'd to Ho-
 nour and Reverence him in good earnest,
 Ourselves.

4. It will, beyond all this, work in
 us a deep Humility, and Consciousness
 of our own Imperfections. Upon a fre-
 quent Attention to God and his Attri-
 butes, we shall easily discover our own
 Weakness and Emptiness; Our swelling
 Thoughts of ourselves will abate, and
 Psal lxi. we shall see and feel, that we are *al-*
together lighter to be laid in the Ba-
lance, than Vanity. And this is a Les-
 son, which, to the greatest Part of Man-
 kind, is, I think, very well worth learn-
 ing. We are naturally Presumptuous and
 Vain; full of Ourselves, and regardless

of every thing besides : Especially, when s E R M.
some little Outward Privileges distinguish I.
Us from the rest of Mankind ; then, 'tis
odds, but we look into Ourselves with
great degrees of Complacency ; and are
wiser (and better every way) *in our* Prov.xxvi.
*own Conceit, than seven Men, that can*¹⁶.
render a Reason. Now nothing will
contribute so much to the Cure of
this Vanity, as a due Attention to
God's Excellencies, and Perfections : By
comparing These with Those which, we
imagine, belong to us, we shall learn,
not to think of ourselves more bightly Rom.xii.
*than we ought to think of ourselves,*³.
but to think soberly : We shall find more
Satisfaction in looking upwards, and
humbling ourselves before our com-
mon Creator, than in casting our Eyes
downwards with Scorn upon our Fel-
low Creatures, and setting at nought
any Part of the Work of his Hands.
The vast Distance we are at from
Real and Infinite Worth will astonish
us so much, that we shall not be
tempted to value Ourselves upon those

S E R M. lesser Degrees of Pre-eminence, which

1. Custom, or Opinion, or some little accidental Advantages have given Us over other Men.

5. I shall mention but one Use of it more, and 'tis This; That a conscientious Praise of God will keep Us back from all false and mean Praises, all fulsome and servile Flatteries, such as are in Use among Men. Praising, as 'tis commonly managed, is nothing else but a Trial of Skill upon a Man, how many good Things we can possibly say of him. All the Treasuries of Oratory are ransack'd, all the fine things that ever were said, are heap'd together, for his sake; and no matter, whether it belongs to him, or not; so there be but enough on't. Which is one deplorable Instance, among a thousand, of the Baseness of human Nature, its small Regard to Truth and Justice; to Right, or Wrong; to what is, or is not to be praised. But he, who hath a deep Sense of the Excellencies of God upon his Heart, will make a God of nothing besides.

besides. He will give every One his s E R M. just Encomium, Honour where Honour is due, and as much as is due; because it is his Duty to do so: But the Honour of God will suffer him to go no farther. Which Rule, if it had been observed, a Neighbouring Prince, (who now, God be thanked, needs Flattery somewhat more than ever he did) would have wanted a great deal of that Incense which hath been offered up to him by his Adorers.

Upon these Grounds doth the Duty of Praise stand, and these are the Obligations that bind us to the Performance of it. 'Tis the End of our Being, and the very Rule and Law of Our Nature; flowing from the Two great Fountains of human Action, the Understanding and the Will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It is the most Excellent Part of our Religious Worship; enduring to Eternity, after the rest shall be *done away*; and paid even Now, in the frankest Manner, with the least Regard to our own Interest. It recom-

S E R M. mends itself to us by several peculiar

Properties, and Advantages; as it carries more Pleasure in it, than all other Kinds of Devotion; as it enlarges and exalts the several Powers of the Mind; as it breeds in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and a Willingness to promote it in the World; as it teaches us to be Humble and Lowly Ourselves; and yet preserves us from base and sordid Flattery, from bestowing mean and undue Praises upon Others.

IV. I shall now shut up the arguing Part of this Discourse, with a short Application to Two Sorts of Persons; the *Careless*, and the *Profane*; One of which Neglects the Practice of so Important a Duty, the Other lives in an open Defiance of it.

A Neglect in this Case, doth certainly involve in it a very high Degree of Guilt and Folly: For 'tis (we see) the Neglect of our Duty, and Honour, our Interest, and our Pleasure, all at once. 'Tis to omit doing that, which we were purposely

posely sent into the World to do ; and s E R M. without doing which, all the other Af- I. fairs of Life are but one continued Imper-  tinence : That, which we have so many Obligations to do, and no Excuse for leaving undone ; since Praise is within every Man's Reach ; there is no one but hath it in his Power to be thankful.

God commanded the *Jews* to acknowledge his Sovereignty and Beneficence, by Sacrifices ; a Costly and a Troublesome Way of Worship. Of Us he requires only the Cheap and Easy offering of Our Thanks and Praises, —— and shall we not pay it ? Alas ! We do not ! Every thing proves an Hindrance to us in the Way to this our bounden Duty and Service : We are too idle, or too busy to attend upon it. And even when we find Leisure enough ; yet how cold and how insensible are we, whilst 'tis going forward ! *We draw nigh unto him with our Mouths, and honour him with our Lips* (perhaps) ; *but our Hearts are far from him.* And do we then know, what it is to praise God becomingly ? Do we remember,

Mat.xv.8.

S E R M. how the great Teacher of Thanksgiving

1. summons up every One of his Faculties
 to assist him in it? *Bless the Lord, O my Soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy Name!* 'Tis a Work that will employ *all that is within us*, will call for all the Application, and Vigour, and Warmth, that we can possibly bestow upon it. Cold and Languid Praise, is no Praise; this Sacrifice can be no longer acceptable than 'tis burning.

To those Men, who live in the *Contempt* of this Duty, we have also somewhat to say, if they would but hear us. They are generally such, as pretend a high Sense of the Dignity of human Nature, and bear no small Respect to their own Understandings. Now, tho' other Parts of Religious Worship should happen to be too mean and low for such great Minds to take up with; yet This, methinks, might deserve to be thought Equal to them. Let Confession and Prayer go only for the Arts of Whining and Begging, and be as much beneath them as they imagine; yet surely,
 Praise

Praise hath somewhat in it so great, ~~S E R M.~~
and so noble, as may invite them to ^{1.} practise it. 'Tis a Subject, fit for the
most enlarg'd Capacities to dwell on ;
and such an one, as even Those would
certainly find themselves rais'd and im-
prov'd by.

If it were possible for These Men to have a Relish of any thing in this Kind, we would desire them to make the Tryal ; to take the Hymn, call'd *Te Deum*, into their Hands, and to read it attentively ; and then tell us truly, whether they did not find their Minds fill'd, and their Affections strangely rais'd by the Images which there occur'd to them ; Whether they did not perceive themselves to be somewhat above themselves, whilst they were perusing it. And these Effects, of which every Man, who joins in that Hymn, must be sensible, are owing to that Majestick Plainness and Simplicity of Thought which goes through it, Unadorned by Words, Unenlivened by Figures ! 'Tis the Matter alone which supports the Expression : And because

The Duty of

~~SE R M.~~ the Matter therein contain'd, is, the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, the pure and genuine Objects of Praise; therefore is the Hymn itself so lofty and moving.

But, alas! We speak in vain! The Men, who are bold enough to slight a Duty of this Rank and Character, will easily slight every thing that can be offer'd to bring them to it. All we can say to them is, that, as God made them for his Glory, so he will certainly serve the Ends of that Glory upon them, one way or another. And therefore, if they will not freely praise him for his Goodness in this World, they shall surely, whether they will or no, contribute to the Praise of his Justice in the next.

V. Thus have I attempted to Describe this Duty, to set out the great *Reasonableness*, and to stir You up to the *Practice* of it. And certainly, it was never more reasonable, than on This Occasion, when we commemorate such Past,

Past, and feel such Present Mercies. The s E R M. Restoration of the Monarchy, and of I. all those Blessings in Church and State  that came back with it ; the Re-establishment of the *Beauty of Praise* in our Sanctuary , the Return of Peace and Plenty, of Learning, and all the Arts of Civil Life ; the Reducing us from Confusion and Rage, into Order and Friendliness, and making Us a Nation at Unity in itself ; Lovely at home, and Terrible abroad. These were such sound and substantial Blessings as will wear well ; and though done a great while ago, will yet deserve a great while hence a Place in our Kalendars. Neither Love to our Country, nor the Honour we bear to Those who rule over Us; neither Our Gratitude to God, nor our Good-will towards Men, will suffer such Wonders of Providence to slip out of our Minds ; or the Day in which they were brought about, easily to grow Old upon Us.

S E R M. The Benefits, we then received, were

I. indeed exceeding great, and would justly
 claim a larger Share in our present
 Reflections, had not the Goodness of
 God taken off our Thoughts a little
 from that Subject, by calling us to the
 Acknowledgment of New Loving Kind-
 ness. For, behold, what glorious
 Things the Lord hath again wrought for
 Us ! Blessing their Majesties Forces with
 a great and signal Victory over the most
 haughty and insolent of Enemies : A
 Victory so Early, so Complete, and so
 Cheaply purchas'd, that we have some
 Reason to hope, it may fix the Fortune
 of the War, and put an End to the De-
 structions of the Destroyer ; to whom
 we trust, God hath now said, as to the
 Sea itself, —— *Hitherto shalt thou come,*
but not farther ; and here shall thy proud
Waves be stayed.

Job
xxxviii.
11.

Blessed be God, who did not utterly
 cast out our Prayers; and our Supplica-
 tions; but delay'd only to answer them,
 till a *Day of Salvation*, till an *accept-
 able Time*, when the Mercy would be
 dearer

dearer to Us, and his Goodness more ^{S E R M.} remarkably seen in bestowing it ! ^{1.} 
when we were alarm'd with Invasions from Abroad, and Conspiracies at Home ; when Men threatened to *swallow us up quick* ; when Success was now so requisite to preserve the Honour of the Nation, to support their Majesties Throne, and to strengthen the Hands of their Allies : Then did he appear, and own Our Cause ; Then was the God of Hosts our Strength, and our Shield. Surely, *There is no End of that Goodness*, which continues thus to pursue us ; which vouchsafes to establish to Us, and to our Posterity, those Blessings, under which we have been so unthankful, and so ingrateful already ! and to give us fresh Opportunities of Praise, which I hope we shall make a better Use of !

Let us, therefore, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving* ; and not That only, but *Ourselves also, our Souls and Bodies, to be a Reasonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice* : Let us render him the Fruit
of

S E R M. of our Lips, and the Obedience of our
I. Lives, that these Blessings may not prove
~ a Curse to us; but that He may still be
Our God, and We may be his People.

*To Him, with the Son, and the Holy
Ghost, be all Honour, Praise and
Glory, henceforth, and for ever-
more! Amen.*

The Power of Charity to Cover Sin.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

President and Governors

Of the HOSPITALS of

Bridewell and Bethlehem,

I N

B R I D E W E L L - C H A P E L ,

August 16, 1694.

i St. PETER iv. 8.

Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.

GOD be thanked, the frequent Re-^{serm.}
turns of such Pious Meetings as ^{II.}
these, in this Rich and Charitable CITY,
have

S E R M. have made the general Argument of
I. CHARITY, the Nature and chief Properties, the several Grounds and Reasons
of this Duty so well understood, that,
to Entertain you with a Discourse at
large on that Subject, would be a very
needless and useless Attempt. So many
Eminent Pens have gone before, in this
Way, as have left it very difficult for
those who come after, either to say any
thing which They *have not* said, or not
to say That much worse, which They
have.

Upon this Account, and because, indeed, I take General Discourses, for the most Part, to be like Large Prospects, where the Eye is lost by the wide Compass it takes, and sees so many things at once, that it sees nothing distinctly; I have chosen at present to point Your Thoughts only on One particular Property of this Great Virtue, which hath been not often handled, I think; and even Then, not always well understood: It is That, which the Apostle St. Peter proposeth to Us, in those few Words I

have read to You, —— *Charity shall cover s E R M.
the Multitude of Sins.*

I.

Few as they are, they will sufficiently employ our Thoughts at this time, if we consider, in the

First Place, The several Explications I.
that have been given of them, and satisfy ourselves which of These ought to take Place. If,

Secondly, We free That One True II.
Genuine Meaning of the Words from the Exceptions which lie against it. If,

Thirdly, We establish the Truth laid III.
down upon its proper Grounds and Reasons. And if,

Fourthly, We make some few useful IV.
Deductions from it.

After this is done, the little Time that V.
is left, will properly be spent in applying what hath been said more immediately to the Occasion of this present Assembly.

Chas-

SERM. *Charity shall Cover the Multitude of
II. Sins.*

I. There is scarce any Man, I believe, who hears these Words, that is not ready to frame to himself this Sense of them ; " That the Virtue of *Charity* " is of so great Price in the Sight of " God, that Those Persons, who possess " and exercise it in any Eminent man- " ner, are peculiarly Entitled to the " Divine Favour and Pardon, with re- " gard to numberless Slips and Failings " in their Duty, which they may be " otherwise Guilty of : This Great Chri- " stian Perfection, of which they are " Masters, shall make many Little Im- " perfections to be overlook'd and un- " observ'd ; it shall *Cover the Multitude* " *of Sins.*

This, I say, is the account, which every Man naturally gives himself of these Words, at his first hearing them ; and it is for That very Reason probably, that That is the True and Genuine Account of them. For, supposing the Original.

Original Text to be well and clearly ren- ^{S E R M.}
dered in our Version, it will, I am of ^{II.}
Opinion, be found, that That Sense of
any Passage, which, after attending to
the Force of the Words, and to their
Coherence with what goes before, and
what follows, First occurs to the Mind,
is generally the Justest and Truest.

This hath not however been always
thought a Good Rule in the present Case.
For several Pious, and some Judicious
Men, finding the Words, in their plain
and familiar Meaning, to carry some-
what of a suspicious Sound with them,
and to border a little (as They Thought)
on the Papal Doctrine of *Works Meri-
torious*, have, therefore, taken some
Pains to give a Different Interpretation
of them. I shall offer, first, to your
View some of these mistaken Senses, ere
I come to consider that which, I think,
was intended by St. Peter; because Each
of these doth certainly propose a Clear
and Apposite Truth to us, tho' perhaps
not truly drawn from the Passage now
before us.

S E R M.

11. *First*, then, the Words have been understood to contain an Account of that particular Instance of Charity, which we call *Good-Nature*: by which we pass by little Slights and Injuries, interpret Things in the best Sense, are not apt to take, or return an Affront, not forward to publish, or believe an ill Report of any One: by which we turn our Eyes always towards the best Side of a Man, and chuse rather to look on his Virtues than his Failures; and by which we constantly interpose our good Offices, wherever we think they may be serviceable, either to the composing Old Differences, or preventing New ones.

And This Sense is grounded upon a supposed Relation there is between These Words in St. Peter, and Those in the *Proverbs*; *Hate stirreth up Strifes, but Love covereth all Sins.* Now, tho' indeed, in *Our Translation*, there is some Similitude between the Words of the Text, and this Passage in the *Proverbs*; yet, as it lies in the *Septuagint-Version* (which

(which the Apostles made use of) it ~~se R M:~~
 bears no such Resemblance to the Text ^{II.}
 as may make it probable that the One ~~se R M:~~
 ought to be Expounded by the Other.
 On the contrary, it deserves Observation,
 that, where-ever the *Greek Phrase* *, which
 is here translated by *Covering Sin*, oc-
 curs in Scripture, it constantly signifies ^{See Psal.}
 that Pardon of Sin which proceeds from ^{Ixxxiv. 1.}
God, not any Instances of Good Nature ^{and Neh.}
 and Forgiveness exercised by *Men*. ^{iv. 5.}

We may farther observe, that This Sense of the Words is by no means full enough to bear the Weight of that emphatic and solemn Preface with which the Apostle introduces them: *but above all things* (says He, in the Words immediately before the Text) *have fervent Charity among your selves: for Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.* 'Εντείναι γάρ τινα, intense, or fervent Charity must signify somewhat more than the bare Acts and Offices of *Good-Nature*. If they, to

* Καλέσθη αμαρτίας.

S E R M. whom the Apostle wrote, were *above all* things to have *fervent Charity* among themselves, it could not be for This Reason, because Charity would render them inoffensive towards Others, and not easy to be offended Themselves. For tho' This be a commendable Degree of Virtue, and very fit to be enjoined, because not frequently practised ; yet can it not deserve that peculiar Emphasis and Stress which is here laid upon it. Especially, if we consider it as succeeding the mention of those more important and necessary Duties, to which the Apostle exhorts them in the preceding Verse, the *being sober, and watching unto Prayer* : *Above* all which, it cannot be supposed, that the Duty of conversing with one another according to the Rules of *Goad-Nature* and *Gentleness* should be enjoined.

The Words, therefore, have, in the Second Place, been thus also interpreted, *Charity shall cover the multitude of Sins* ; that is, says the excellent *Grotius*, it will have a mighty Influence towards reclaiming

ing Sinners from the Error of their Ways ; see R.M. the Consequence of which is, That the ^{II.} Sins of Men thus reclaimed, are pardoned, or covered. Charity, which is an exalted Love of God and our Neighbour, will make us industrious in procuring Glory to the One, by the Salvation of the Other. It will create a mighty Zeal for the Interests of Virtue, and the Honour of the Gospel, and the Good of Souls ; and it will run through all the Difficulties that lie in the way towards so good an End, with Readiness and Pleasure. It will not be frightned from making Attempts even on Those of the first Rank in Wickedness, the Worst and most Hardned of Men ; because it knows, that *Their* Revolt from Sin to Virtue (if it can be compas'd) will be of mighty Consequence to Religion, and will probably draw whole Troops of Common Sinners along with it : The Sense they have of their Own Sins being covered, will make *Them* also eager in their turn to cover those of Other Men.

SER.M. This is a very Good and Pious Sense
II. of the Words, but (I believe, it will
~~be~~ be allow'd me) no very Easy and Na-
tural One: they must be rack'd ere
they can be brought to confess This
Meaning. However it was what that
Learned Person was led into by a for-
mer Explication he had made of a pa-
rallel Place in St. *James*; which I shall
crave leave to produce at length, and
to comment upon, because I take it to
be the *Key* of the Text, which easily
and readily lets us into the True Sense
of it. *Bretbren* (says St. *James*, at the
Conclusion of his Epistle) *if any One of*
^{James v.}
^{19, 20.}
You do Err from the Truth, and One
Convert him, let him know, that he
which converteth a Sinner from the
Error of his Ways, shall save a Soul from
Death, and shall bide a Multitude of
Sins. He intended to shut up the Epistle
with recommending to them one of the
most important and useful Virtues, That
of endeavouring the Conversion and Re-
formation of Men. And he intended also
to stir them up to the Exercise of this Vir-
tue

tue by the most powerful Motives he s E R M.
 could propose : What are they ? Why, ^{II.}
 first, That *He who converteth a Sinner*
from the Error of his Ways, should con-
 sider, that he *saveth a Soul from Death* ;
 and then, secondly, and chiefly, That
he shall [also] cover a Multitude of Sins.
 Whose Sins? Those of the Converted
 Person? Nay, but that was already
 said, and much more than that in the
 foregoing Motive, *He shall save a Soul*
from Death: for surely the saving a Soul
 from Death, necessarily includes and pre-
 supposes the Remission of its Sins. It
 must then be meant of His Sins who
 makes, and not of His who becomes,
 the Convert: And Thus indeed this
 Last Clause carries a New Motive in it,
 distinct from that in the Former; and
 such an One as riseth beyond it, and
 more sensibly touches those to whom
 it is address'd; and was therefore fit to
 be propos'd in the Last place, and to be
 left, as a Sting in their Minds. 'Tis
 as if St. James had said more at length,
 " Let such an one know, that He shall,

S E R M. " by this Means, not *only* save a Soul

II. " from Death (though This itself be a
 ~~~~~ " very Great and Desirable Thing) but  
 " shall *also* (which more nearly con-  
 " cerns him) secure to himself on this  
 " Account the Pardon of many Sins.

Now the Words of St. *James* here ex-  
 plain'd, are exactly the same with those  
 of St. *Peter*, in my Text; and the Occa-  
 sion upon which they are introduced,  
 and their Dependence on the Context, is  
 much the same in both Places; except  
 only that they are used in my Text, as  
 a Motive to Charity in general; but in  
 St. *James*, with Regard only to One  
 main and eminent Branch of it, the  
 Conversion of Souls: What therefore  
 St. *James* means by them, is meant also  
 by St. *Peter*: And, consequently, that  
 most Obvious and Easy Sense, which I  
 mentioned at the Entrance of this Dis-  
 course, is, in all Probability, the Truest:  
 And, as such, I shall take the Liberty  
 here once again to repeat it. It is This,  
 " That the Virtue of Charity is of so  
 " great Price in the Sight of God, that  
 " They,

" They, who possess and exercise it in s E R M.  
" any Eminent Manner, are peculiarly II.  
" entitled to the Divine Favour and Par-   
" don, with regard to numberless Slips  
" and Failings in their Duty, which they  
" may be Otherwise guilty of. This  
" great Christian Perfection, of which  
" they are Masters, shall make many  
" little Imperfections to be over-look'd  
" and unobserv'd ; It *shall Cover the*  
" *Multitude of Sins.*

Nor are there wanting parallel Places in other Parts of Holy Writ, which confirm this Interpretation of the Words and the Doctrine contained in it. For besides those Passages in the Apocryphal Writers, which directly affirm, that *Alms* Tab.xii. 9. *shall purge away Sin*, and that, *As Water* Eccles. iii. *quencheth Flaming Fire*, so *Alms* ma-<sup>30.</sup> *keth an Atonement for Sins*; there are in the Books of *Proverbs*, and *Daniel*, two Texts, very express to this Purpose : In the first of these, the *Wise Man* declares, that *by Mercy and Truth Iniquity is pur- Pro.xvi.6. ged*; and in the Latter the Prophet coun- cels *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *break off his Dan. iv. Sins*<sup>27.</sup>.

S E R M. *Sins by Righteousness*, (or rather, as it  
 II. is in all the Ancient Versions, to redeem  
 ~~~~~ his Sins by Alms-deeds) *and his Iniqui-  
 ties by shewing Mercy to the Poor*. And
 were it proper in this Place to vouch the
 Testimony of the Earliest Writers of the
 Church, it were easy to produce, from
 their Works, Passages without Number,
 wherein they speak the same Language.

I fear I have been tedious in settling
 the *Sense of the Words*: but it is no
 more than was requisite, in so important
 a Point, so little insisted on from the Pul-
 pit: and which may be thought liable to
 some Just *Exceptions*.

II. *These* I am now, in the *Second Place*,
 to propose, and shall endeavour to re-
 move. The doing of which will give
 me an Occasion of clearing the Sense,
 and limiting the Bounds of this Truth
 more exactly and fully.

The *First* and great Exception against
 This way of Expounding the Text is,
 that it gives too great a Colour to the
 Popish

Popish Dctrines of *Merit* and *Supererogation*; and seems to lessen the Worth of the only True and Proper Satisfaction for Sin, made by our Saviour on the Cross. For, at this Rate, what need of Remission of Sin in every Case by the Blood of Christ, since We ourselves are in Good Measure capable of making the Atonement? We who have it, it seems, in our Power, by the Exercise of one Particular Virtue to secure a Pardon to ourselves for neglecting all the rest; and can blot out the Remembrance of an Ill-spent Life, by a few Acts of Charity at the Close of it? As if God were so much beholden to us for our Good Deeds, as to be bound, for their Sakes, to forgive us our Ill Ones! Or, as if the Performance of our Duty in One Case, could make any manner of Amends to him for our Non-performance of it in another! This, say They, is very Easy and Comfortable Divinity!

To take off the Force of this Objection, it will be requisite to reflect a little

SERM. tie on these following Considerations.

I I. And,

Wh^t, We must Explain ourselves a little more particularly, What is to be understood by that *Charity*, to which the Promise of the Text is made; What it is in the *Nature* and *Extent*, and what in the *Intention* and *Degree* of it.

As to its *Nature* and *Extent*, it must be understood to signify not barely *Acts of Relief* to the Poor and Needy, as the Vulgar and Confined Use of the Word imports; but, more largely, all the several Ways of *Universal Beneficence* and *Kindness*, by which one Man can be serviceable to another. Farther, it expresses not the *Outward Material Act* only, but must be supposed to take in also the *Vital Form* of it, that *Inward Principle* of a *Sincere Love* towards God and Man, from whence it regularly flows; and separated from which, the mere external Act is a Lifeless and Useless Performance. And Then, even of Charity thus Large-ly understood, it is *not a common Degree* that is meant here; 'Tis to an Intense or

Fer-

Fervent Charity, to a mighty and extra-~~S E R M.~~
ordinary Measure of it, that this mighty ^{II.}
and extraordinary Blessing is expressly said
to belong.

2dly, Even of this Exalted Degree of
Charity, it is not said, *that it shall cover all manner of Transgressions*, how
Gross and Heinous soever ; The Words of
the Text do by no means carry us to af-
fert thus much concerning it : but only
(as you have heard them Explain'd to
You) seem to say, that it shall be our
Excuse for many lesser Neglects and
Failings in our Duty, many Sins of In-
firmity, Surprise, and Daily Incursion ;
which are properly enough styl'd *the
Multitude of Sins* : It *shall Cover* such
Offences only, as are consistent with a
State of True *Charity* ; and surely Those
cannot be very Gross and Presumptuous.
For He, who lives in the Perfect Exer-
cise of that Fervent *Charity*, which the
Text recommends, abounding Inwardly
and Outwardly in all the various In-
stances and Expressions of it, and in
those several Virtues and Graces which
do

SER.M. do naturally attend it: I say, whoever
II. he is, that is thoroughly possesst and acted
by this Divine Principle of *Love*, can-
not be supposed capable of committing
any Heinous Sins, *whilst* he is under
the Guidance of it: And as for Those
which he had fallen into before the At-
tainment of this Gift, They were cer-
tainly remitted also and cover'd, *before*
the Attainment of it; else, doubtless, he
had never attain'd it. So that no Great
Guilt of any Kind can well be thought
to harbour in that Breast, where true
Charity dwells.

Indeed, it is not universally certain,
that, whenever God remits the *Guilt* of
Sin, he remits the Punishment too (the
Temporal Punishment, I mean) for Wick-
ed Men, upon their Return to Virtue, do
not seldom find, to their Cost, that a
Sin may be pardoned, and yet all the Ill
Consequences of it not prevented; and
they can, therefore, often trace the Steps
of their former Misdoings, in the several
Evils of Life that afterwards befal
them. And in This Sense, therefore,
it

it may be, and is probably true, that ~~S E R M.~~ Charity shall cover many Sins, even of ~~11.~~ the first Magnitude; *i. e.* it shall prevent ~~11.~~ the Temporal Inflictions due to them, and often, even after Pardon obtain'd, pursuing the Committers of them: But it contributes to a Removal of the *Guilt* only of such Frailties and Infirmities of a lesser Size, as may be thought consistent with a State of Charity. And therefore, to except against the Doctrine laid down, as encouraging the Charitable Man to expect Remission of all Manner of Sins, how great and how numerous soever, is to load it with a Difficulty which doth no ways belong to it. But,

3dly, Even as to these slighter Omissions and Failings, it is not pretended, that they are cover'd by Acts of Mercy and Charity in any Sense, but what includes the Application of the Merits of our Saviour's Blood, the only Fountain of Satisfaction for all Kind of Sins, for the Least as well as the Greatest. It is true indeed, and granted, that the Blood

S E R M. Blood of Christ alone can expiate Sins.

11. However, this hinders not but that God may make such and such Acts of Ours the *Conditions* and *Grounds* (as it were) of applying the Virtue of that Blood to us. And thus Our Good Works, tho' they are not the *meritorious*, yet may become, if I may so speak, the *occasional*, Cause of Pardon and Grace to us. And if This be establishing the Popish Doctrine of Salvation by Works, then hath our Saviour Himself, I fear, establish'd it, in that Divine Form of Prayer, in which he hath taught us to say, *Forgive Us Our Trespasses, as We forgive Those that Trespass against Us. As We forgive Those!* i.e. *Inasmuch as*, on That very Account (among Others) because, we forgive Those that trespass against Us. Where, we see, the Exercise of one great Instance of Charity, Forgiveness of Enemies, is made the Ground of our asking and expecting Forgiveness from God.

4thly and Lasty, It follows not, that because so Vast a Recompence is promis'd to

to a Fervent Charity, therefore the Exercise of it is in the Way of Supererogation, so that we might have let it alone without Fault or Blame. We may be strictly, and by the very Letter of the Law, obliged to it; and yet it may include so high a Pitch of Perfection, and one so seldom attain'd, that God may think fit, where-ever it is attain'd, mightily to reward it; and to encourage us towards doing our Duty in some One Great Point, by an Assurance, that in many smaller Instances he will not be *Extreme to mark what is done amiss* by us. Our Gracious Master deals with Us in This Case, as a Man oftentimes doth with his Servant; if he be Trusty and Faithful to him in a Busines of Great Concern and Moment, tho' his Duty bound him to be so, yet shall that Piece of Eminent Service excuse many Neglects and Failings upon Other Occasions.

There is yet a *Second Objection*, tho' indeed so slight an One, as, after the Former hath been removed, is scarce worth mentioning. It is taken from that Say-

S E R M. ing of our Lord, That They *will Love*
II. much, to whom much *hath been* forgiven.

Contrary to which, the Text, as here expounded, seems to affirm, that They who *do* love much, *shall* have much Forgiven them. But these two Truths are easily reconcil'd: For it is not hard to understand, how That, which is the *Cause* of a thing in One Respect, may be the *Effect* of it in another. And accordingly, it may be very true, that He, who is Forgiven much, will, for that very Reason, Love much: And it may be as True, that He, who thus Loveth much, because much hath been Forgiven him, shall, on that very Account, have much more forgiven him. 'Tis just the same Case as between Me and my Friend: I may passionately love him, because he hath pardon'd me the Great and many Injuries I formerly did him, while we were at Variance: And again, the Knowledge he hath of my Love, may incline him to pass over any Future Mistakes and Miscarriages, whereby I may happen to offend him.

The Doctrine being thus fix'd, and S E R M. freed from Exception; I go on, as I pro-
pos'd, in the *Third Place*, to enquire into
the *Grounds and Reasons* of this Won-
drous Efficacy, so particularly attributed
to the Exercise of Charity: For we read
not that God hath annex'd this Promise
to any other Grace or Virtue of the Chris-
tian Life whatsoever, but to This only,
that it *shall cover Sin*; of which these
several Accounts may, with some Proba-
bility, be given.

1st, That It was really more fit and proper that such a Return as this should be made to Charity, than to any other Virtue; because it adjusts and proportions the Reward of Acting to the Act it self; and makes the Duty of Man towards God, and the Blessing of God upon the Performance of that Duty, to have a near Relation and Resemblance to Each other. I explain myself in this manner: The Chief Employment, the highest Point and Perfection of Charity is, to pass by the Offences and Injuries of Men;

S E R M. to pardon the Malice of our Enemies, and

11. the Ingratitude of our Friends. To Him
therefore, who advances to this Height of
Virtue, God hath very *aptly* and *suitably*
promis'd, that His Faults and Offences
too shall be pardon'd: as he deals with
his Neighbour so will God deal with
Him: Mercy shall be shew'd upon Him,
who shews Mercy: if we forgive Other
Men their Trespasses, then will our
Heavenly Father forgive us our Tres-
passes also. There is, You see, a strict
Analogy betwixt the Reward annex'd,
and one Great Instance of the Virtue en-
join'd: which is God's Method of put-
ting us in Mind of what we are to Do,
by his Promises, as well as his Commands;
and of exciting Us to endeavour after a
Perfection, not easily attain'd, by assur-
ing Us, that the Exercise of it shall, in
the very same kind, return doubly and
trebly into our Own Besom. But,

2dly, The Good and Charitable Man
is peculiarly entitled to the Pardon of
many Sins, because he is in a peculiar
manner liable to incur the Guilt of ma-
ny;

ny ; either from the *Natural Frame and S F R M.*
Make of his Mind, which disposes him II.
to this Virtue, or from the very *Exercise* 
of the Virtue it self.

Charity is grafted always on Good-Nature, and a Sweetness of Disposition : which though it be a Temper of Mind very lovely and desireable ; yet is it such a^t, in the Circumstances of our present Imperfect State, hath its Inconveniences ; and is what makes Conversation dangerous in a World, where we are surrounded with Temptations. It hinders us from aiming ourselves with that obstinate Resolution of Mind, that stubborn incomplying Virtue, which is requisite to preserve a Man undefil'd and blameless. It makes us easy and yielding to Common Customs, and receiv'd Opinions ; Ready to comply with a Thousand things (of which we are not exactly well satisfied) upon the pure score of good Nature, and because we cannot allow ourselves to be troublesome. And being found and known to be of this Easy and Complying Temper ; this very thing will

S E R M. invite Ill Spirits, and Ill Men, to make
II. their Attempts upon us.

~~~~~ And then the \* *Exercise* of the Virtue itself especially where the Principle of it is strong, lays us open to several Failings. It makes us omit oftentimes the Duties incumbent on us from our Professions and Callings; and perhaps neglect to take care of Those, whom it is the First Point of Charity to take care of, our Children and Families. It warms us with such a Zeal for doing Good, as breaks out sometimes into Act<sup>s</sup>, not reconcileable to the Rules of Discretion, Decency, and Right Reason; and which do real Dis-service to the Cause of God and Religion, instead of promoting it. St. *Francis's* Charity went a little too far, when it was taken up in providing for Birds, and Beasts, after a most Extraordinary and Singular manner: the Virtue was not at all beholden to him for being shew'd in

\* Ἀγάπη ζεῦς (τοῦ δὶ τὸ πάσιν αἴτιον τῆς αἰγαλεῖας) μυεῖσθαι γίγνεται αἴτιον κακῶν, τοῖς ὅπερι χρεωμένοις αὐτῇ. Chrysoft. de Sacerdot. p. 250. Ed. Cant.

such a Dress, as, instead of rendering it S E R M.  
desireable in the Eyes of Men, made it II.  
look ridiculous.

Indeed Love (the Spring-Head of Charity) as it is the sweetest of All Passions, so is one of the strongest too; and, if it have the Reins but once given to it, will go near to run away with its Rider: that is, if a due Care be not taken of it, it will exalt our Fancy so high, and disorder it so much, as to put it out of the Reach and Rule of the Governing Powers of the Mind. And then, what wild Work doth there follow! Instead of Wise and Rational Ways of Beneficence, foolish Undertakings, and impracticable Designs! Instead of a manly and sober Form of Devotion, all the extravagant Rants and silly Freaks of Enthusiasm! For the Proof of which I appeal to the Lives of many of those Saints to whom the Church of *Rome* hath allow'd a Place in her Kalendar!

Finally, the Charitable Man, who loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love his own Virtue too; I mean, that

SE R M. he is apt to over-rate the just Price of it,  
 11. and too much to undervalue every thing  
 ~~~~~ else in Comparison of it. A Man may  
 be so much struck with the Beauty and
 Excellence of Charity, as to be less con-
 cerned than he ought to be for a sound
Faith, and make Shipwreck of the One,
 whilst he is too hastily and zealously pur-
 suing the Other.

Thus, I say, the Good and Merciful
 Man, being particularly liable to some
 Infirmities, is as particularly comforted
 with a gracious Assurance of their Par-
 don.

3dly, God seems on purpose to have
 plac'd this Mark of Distinction upon
 Charity, to shew us, how tender and
 careful He is of *Our Welfare*; what
 Bowels of Love and Compassion he hath
 for Us: Since that is His Favourite
 Virtue, the Virtue he chiefly delights in,
 and delights to reward; the Excercise of
 which is most sweet and comfortable,
 most useful and advantageous to the Sons
 of Men. He design'd, by This Convin-
 cing Instance of his Goodness, to prove

to us, that he was not an hard and rigorous Master, who enjoin'd us Commands, for his *Own* sake, and purely for the Pleasure of being Obey'd; but that his great Intention was to twist our Duty and our Happiness together: And therefore, the more our Ease and Advantage was concern'd in the Practice of any Virtue, the stronger Ties and Engagements to it was he resolv'd to lay upon us.

4thly, Charity is particularly available to procure a Remission of the Guilt of Sin, and a Relaxation of the Punishment due to it; because it particularly engages in our Behalf the Prayers of all Good Men, and of all Those Persons to whom the Instances of our Goodness extend. A Kind and Beneficent Man, as He is a Common Blessing to the World, so is He bless'd by all Mankind that know him: All are ready to Implore the Mercies of God, Spiritual and Temporal, upon the Merciful-minded; especially the Poor and Miserable, (whose Prayers God hath in a particular manner promis'd to hear) are constant and earnest Intercessors at the

Throne

S E R M. Throne of Grace for him. So that, where-
 11. as the Possessors of other Virtues stand
 ~~~~~ chiefly upon their own Bottom for the obtaining Pardon and Grace, Every Man almost becomes a Supplicant for the Merciful and Liberal: and no wonder, therefore, if such United Requests prevail. But,

*5tly*, and principally, God hath made this Promise to *Charity*, and to no Other Virtue, because it is really the Chief and most Excellent of Virtues, and the most Excellent Thing ought to have the most Excellent Reward. It is the great Perfection, the distinguishing Grace of a Christian, preferable to Faith and Hope, in Dignity, in Use, and in the Length of its Duration, as St. Paul hath taught us to reason concerning it. It is call'd the *Great Commandment* \*, the *End of the Commandment* †, and the *Fulfilling of the Law* ‡: and it is really what it is called. For where this Divine Grace dwells, and reigns, there no Moral Attainment of any kind can be totally wanting. Charity is the

\* Matth.

xxii. 38.

† 1 Tim.

1. 5

‡ Rom.

xiii. 10

the Queen of Virtues\* ; the rest are of s E R M.  
Her Retinue, and Train, as it were ; con- II.  
stantly attending on Her, appearing, and  
disappearing with Her : and well, there-  
fore, as a Queen, is she invested by God  
with that Sovereign Prerogative, the  
Power of Covering Sin. It is her Na-  
ture to be comprehensive of, and abound-  
ing in many Duties ; and, therefore, it  
is Her Reward also, to be a Skreen for  
many Failings. Charity is said in Scrip-  
ture to establish a True Friendship, and  
to create a Real Likeness between God  
and Man : God passeth by the Faults,  
therefore of the Charitable, as a Friend  
doth those of his Friend ; the Great Re-  
semblance of the Divine Nature, which  
shines out in him, hides every Lesser Sort  
and Degree of Unlikeness, and makes it  
not to be discerned.

'Tis difficult to stop on so fruitful a  
Subject ; and yet more difficult to ex-  
press one's self becomingly and well. The  
Tongues of Men and Angels, as they are

---

\* Βασιλίς τῶν ἀρετῶν. Chrys. T. VI. p. 193.

said

S E R M. said to be a worthless Gift, in comparison of the Son of Charity, so are they not All able to set out Half the Worth and Excellence of it. St. Paul hath done somewhat towards it, in the XIII<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and to Him I refer You.

IV. It remains, that I should make those few *Inferences* I intended from the Whole, and then point out all that hath been said particularly, upon the Occasion of this Present Assembly. And,

1st, The Truth, which hath been explain'd, suggests to us One Argument against their Opinion, who hold *Justification*, and all the Graces of the Gospel to be convey'd to us by *Faith alone*; in such a Sense as excludes any manner of Regard to our *Works*. For if Justification be The putting a Man into a State of Favour with God by Remission of Sin, then Works of Charity, which contribute to the Remission of our Sins, must contribute also to our Justification. This Point goes generally for a *Speculative Nicety*,

Nicety, not worth insisting upon: But ~~s E R M.~~ surely They, who think it so, have not <sup>II.</sup> well consider'd, what Influence it hath  experimentally had upon *Prætice*, and a Good Life, in many of its Affertors. Some Spiritual Libertines of the *Antinomian* Way, have by it undermined the very Design of the Gospel; and set us free from the Necessity of being Pious, Just, or Good, upon any other Principle, but that of pure *Gratitude* only. And in Those who do not rise to these mad Heights, yet the Persuasions They have entertain'd about Justifying Faith, are observed mightily to lessen their Esteem of Good Works: and from esteeming them less, to come to practise them less, is, God knows, a very Easy Step, and almost an unavoidable One! Witness the celebrated *Institutions* of a great Divine, in which of *Faith* much every where, of *Charity* little any where is spoken; and we are not, therefore, to wonder, if the Rules of Charity should in that Book be as little observed. Indeed these very Rules of Charity, (which I would not willingly

S E R M. willingly, while I am mentioning, trans-  
-  
11. grefs) induce me to think, That many  
Learned and Pious Men hold this Doc-  
trine of Justification by Faith alone, in  
its most rigid Sense, without holding,  
or even discerning the Ill Consequences  
that attend it. However, since the Ill  
Consequences of this Doctrine are suffi-  
ciently plain, both from Reason, and  
Experience, (tho' such Men happen not  
to perceive them) the same Rules of Cha-  
rity forbid us, when the Subject falls in  
our way, to be silent concerning them,  
or suffer Men to think, that those, who  
exclude good Works from being any  
ways Instrumental towards Justifying a  
Sinner, are guilty only of an Innocent  
Mistake, which reacheth no farther than  
bare Speculation. A

2d, Inference is, That, if a Spirit of  
Charity shall cover a Multitude of Sins,  
then may we assure ourselves, that the  
contrary Temper, a Spirit of Hatred,  
Malignity, and Ill Will, shall cover a  
Multitude of Virtues; i. e. They shall  
not be reckoned as Virtues to Him who,  
possesseth

possesseth them; Neither God nor Man s E R M. shall regard them as such, if Charity doth not Crown them. Charity covers many Sins, because it is so noble and so excellent a Virtue: what Virtue then, beyond this, can there be found, of Value sufficient to cover the Sin of Uncharitableness?

*3dly,* From the Promise made in the Text, We may take an Occasion to reflect on the wondrous Goodness and Condescension of God. He hath a Right to all the highest Instances and Degrees of Virtue that is possible for us to abound in; and when we have practis'd them to the utmost, we have done but what we were strictly oblig'd to do: And yet so far he is pleas'd to abate of this Right, as to accept the Performance of One Great Duty in lieu of the Omision of many Others. An Act of Grace and Kindness, which is enhanc'd to Us, by considering, that Reason never did, or could make this known to the Heathen World; although the Gospel hath now reveal'd it to Us. Nay, remarkable it is,

(as)

SER.M. (as I observ'd to you before) that this  
II. Great Duty, which is to compensate, as  
it were, for all our Failings, is the most  
pleasant and delightful Employment that  
belongs to us; the most agreeable to our  
Nature and the most useful to our Fel-  
low-Creatures. Let us not complain,  
therefore, of the Strictness of the Rule  
we are to walk by, and of the Hard-  
ships, which in our Christian Warfare  
we are to undergo. The Rule is strict  
indeed; but then, as there are Great  
Helps and Assurances, enabling us to  
live up to it; so great Abatements and  
Allowances (we see) are made to us  
at last, if we do not. There are in-  
deed difficulties to be undergone: But,  
surely, the *Labour of Love* is none of  
them. That, as it makes a kind of A-  
tonement to God for all the Faults we  
commit, so doth it make an Amends to  
Us for all the Troubles we are at, in  
every other Part of our Duty; It gives  
an Easiness to that Yoke, and a Light-  
ness to that Burden which is laid upon  
us.

*45bly,*

4thly, and *Lastly*, If the Doctrine laid ~~S E R M.~~  
down be good, then have we in it the <sup>II.</sup>  
plainest and most quickning Motive in  
the World to the Exercise of this great  
Duty of Charity; such a Motive, as ex-  
ceeds the United Force of all the Argu-  
ments which ever were offered in this  
Case; and of whose Power if a Man  
can be insensible, all Other Motives will  
doubtless be lost upon him. The wise  
Son of *Syrach* thought he had made a  
reasonable Plea for Charity, when he  
said, *Lay up Thy Treasure according to* ~~Ecclesi-~~  
*the Commandments of the most High,* <sup>xxix. 11,</sup>  
*and it shall bring the more Profit than* <sup>12, 13.</sup>  
*Gold. Shut up Alms in thy Storehouses,*  
*and it shall deliver Thee from All Af-*  
*fliction; It shall fight for Thee against*  
*Thine Enemies better than a mighty*  
*Shield, or a strong Spear.* But how Flat,  
and Cold, and Unmoving is all this, when  
compared with the Life and Energy that  
is in those Few Words; --- *It shall Cover*  
*the multitude of Sins!*

This Motive indeed hath been carry'd  
too far, and abus'd to ill Purposes by

S E R M. Men of another Communion, who, by  
I I. the help of it, have made the most Im-  
pure and Profligate Wretches hope for a  
General Forgiveness of all their Sins, so  
They were but Liberal enough to the  
Church in their Wills; and settled such  
a Revenue upon it, as should make a  
Good Number of Fathers think it worth  
their while to say Daily *Masses* for the  
Soul of the Departed. And how gross a  
way soever This is of Expounding the  
Text, it hath prov'd a very gainful one  
to those who made use of it; For perhaps  
half the Wealth of the Church of *Rome*  
may justly be attributed to it. A strong  
Persuasion of the Truth of this Exposi-  
tion seems to have been one of the chief  
Foundation-stones, upon which a Great  
Part of Her Charitable Buildings have  
been Erected.

The Ministers of the Reform'd Church,  
indeed, dare not go so far in inviting  
you to Works of Charity and Mercy :  
But This they dare, and do affirm ; That  
a true Principle of Charity, is that Qua-  
lification of Mind, which of all others  
is

is most grateful and acceptable to God ; S E R M.  
and such as, at the Day of final Retribu-  
tion, He will have a particular Regard  
to, so as to make no severe Scrutiny in-  
to that Man's Faults and Failings, who  
hath Eminently guided his Life and Prac-  
tice by it. And this they think sufficient-  
ly intimated in our Saviour's Account of  
the Proces of that Day ; where the On-  
ly Head of Enquiry he mentions, is  
what Good and Charitable Deeds we  
have done to any of our Poor Brethren ?  
Which implies thus much at least ; That  
This will be the Chief Point upon which  
we shall be examin'd ; and that Our Ac-  
quittal, as to Neglects in Other Parts of  
Our Duty, will depend very much upon  
Our being able to give a good Answer  
to it.

And, I hope this Assurance itself is a  
sufficient Encouragement to the Practice  
of Charity, without Our needing to strain  
the Words of the Text to so Extravagant  
a Sense, as no Wise Man can believe that  
we *ought*, and no good Man would wish  
that we *might*, take them in.

S E R M. There is indeed one farther Sense of  
II. the Words, than hath yet been mention'd ;  
~~~~~ to which they may, however, be innocently and truly extended. They have been hitherto consider'd only as containing a particular Promise to Particular Persons : They may be understood also with regard to those Blessings which Publick Charities procure on Publick States and Communities. For it is true also, that Acts of Charity shall Cover the Sins of Cities and Kingdoms, as well as those of Private Men, if Cities and Kingdoms do generally agree to perform them.

Our Fore-fathers, we may presume, were of This Opinion ; and were powerfully influenc'd by it, towards setting forward those Charitable Designs, which are a Lasting Honour and Advantage to this City and Kingdom. They could not but see, that the Wealth of the Church, tho' it was really grown too Great, and was by some Rich Lazy Orders in it scandalously employ'd ; yet had been retrench'd, on

on this Account, *beyond* what needed, and s E R M. had not been applied afterwards to any Religious, or Publick Use: but was squander'd away for the most part upon Favourites, and upon such as fell in with the Honest Zeal of our first Reformers, not out of any Principle of Conscience, but the mere Design of enriching Themselves out of the Plunder of Abbies and Monasteries. The Sense of this, doubtless, affected deeply the Good and Pious Men of those Times; and made them very Earnest and Active to procure some part of these *Church Spoils* to be set aside for Charitable Uses: That Retribution, as it were, might, by this Means, be made to God, of what had been torn away in too Large Proportions from his Worship and Service: To speak plainly, —— that by a true Spirit of Charity those Sins might be *Cover'd*, which a Spirit of Lust and Avarice, under the Pretence of reforming the Abuses of Charity, had *caus'd*!

And these Endeavours of theirs God bless'd so wonderfully, that some Milli-

SERMONS of Money were, in a few Years, contributed towards erecting and endowing Hospitals and Houses of Charity. This sufficiently baffled the Calumnies, and stopp'd the Mouths of our Adversaries of the Church of *Rome*, who cried us down, as Men that were Reforming away Good Works, and turning all Religion into a Notional Faith. How other Protestant Countries have freed Themselves from that Imputation, I am not able to say: Sure I am, Ours clear'd itself so well from it, as to turn the Edge of the Objection back upon the Church of *Rome* itsclf. For upon a Fair and Impartial Computation, it appears, that there were Greater Expences upon Publick Works of Charity (such, I mean, as we are at present discoursing of) in Sixty Years after the Reformation, than had been in Five times that Number of Years, while Popery stood: Some have added, — than there were from the *Conquest* down to King *Edward the Sixth*; that Good and Excellent Prince, the Great Promoter

ter and Encourager of these Works ; and s E R M ,
Who is not to be mention'd, without par- II.
ticular Honour, in This House, which 
acknowledges him for Her Pious and Mu-
nificent Founder.

I cannot but observe to You, here,
that it was the Ruling Part of This
Great City, with a good Bishop of *Lon-*
don, and Martyr for the Protestant Reli-
gion, at the Head of them, that by their
United Application, stirr'd up that Young
Prince to undertake so publick-spirited a
Design. And it is Natural for me also at
the same Time to wish, that That Ho-
nourable Body may thus heartily always
continue to join Their Endeavours and
Interests with those of Their *Right Re-*
verend Diocesan, in promoting Publick
Charities, and Publick Blessings of any
kind, either in Church, or State.

Indeed, it must always be remember'd,
to the Honour of This Great Body, That,
as her Foundations of Charity are lar-
ger, for ought I can find, than those of
any Other City in the Christian World ;
so they were All raised or endow'd, ei-

SER M. ther directly by Her own Members; or
11. if by Other Hands, yet at Her earnest and
importunate Suit: So that the Fabricks,
and Revenues of this Kind, that belong
to Her, are not only (as in Other Parts)
the Useful Ornaments of the Place, but so
many standing Monuments also of the
Great Piety, and Unparallel'd Bounty of
Her Ancestors; who solicited the Cause
of the Poor and the Infirm, the Lame and
Wounded, the Vagrant and Lunatick,
with such a particular Industry and Zcal,
as had those Great and Blessed Effects,
which we at this Day see and feel. A
Zcal, never to be forgotten by Men!
and which, we hope, God also will ne-
ver forget! But, when he comes down
to Visit this City for the many Ill Effects
of Wealth misapplied, will for the sake
of it, Visit in Mercy; and consider the
Multitude of her Charities, as well as
That of Her Sins; Graciously allowing
the One to be in some measure a *Cover*
to the Other!

But I have not Room to speak seve-
rally of all the Great Benefactions with
which

which She abounds ; and am call'd upon, S E R M.
by the Occasion of this Present Assembly, II.
to say somewhat more particularly of ~~~~~
those of This Place.

I think it, by no means, a fit and decent thing to vie Charities, and to erect the Reputation of One upon the Ruins of another : This is, for the sake of Charity to forget the True Character, and Essential Properties of it ; which are, as St. Paul tells us, *to be kind, and not to envy, not to vaunt itself, or be puffed up, not to behave itself unseemly.* 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. However, This, I think, I may say, with Modesty and Truth, to the Advantage of That Charity to which we belong ; That, tho' the Bottom of Wealth, it stands upon, be not so Large as that of some Others, yet is it in the Design of it so Comprehensive and Full, as not any where, I think, to be parallel'd.

Here are Supplies to Outward Want and Necessity liberally imparted ; The Poor and Fatherless, not only taken Care of, but so bred up, as to be useful to the Common-wealth, and perhaps to take care

S E R M. care of many others. Here Idle, and
I I. Useless, (and therefore Necessitous) Per-
sons are taught the Best of Lessons, La-
bour ; inur'd to it, and made acquainted
with it ; and then sent out with such a
Stock of Industry, as will do them more
real Service than any Other kind of Be-
nefaction, if They will but make use of
it, and improve it.

Here, Loose Men and Women are re-
duc'd by wholsome Discipline, and Va-
grants by Confinement : Punishment it-
self is made an Instrument of Mercy
and Goodness, and, as Meat is provided
for the Belly, so is there *a Rod for the
Back of Fools*. These Particular Instan-
ces of Charity deserve to be enlarg'd on :
It is an Argument that hath not yet been
handled in its utmost Extent, and may
perhaps ask Your Patience, on some
Other Occasion : But the Time to which
I am confin'd, is now almost run out ;
and there are yet Other Instances behind,
to be infisted on. For

Here, not only External Necessities
are relieved, but Inward Wants also are
supply'd ;

supply'd ; not Ill Manners only are outwardly corrected, but Ill Dispositions also are better'd, Ill Minds reform'd. 
And every single Instance in this kind is not confin'd to the Person who receives the Benefit, but is a real Service to a whole Community. It puts a Stop to a spreading Plague ; nay, it gets Ground upon it, by making Those, who have had the Infection, turn Physicians to Others, by their Example, and Future Good Manners.

Nay, Here, Men recover their Understandings as well as their Virtues ; that is, they recover their Very Selves : and are made once again Members of the Rational Creation, able to See and Know their Duty, and to Guide themselves by that Knowledge of it ; to pay their *Reasonable Service* to God, and to maintain a Civil Intercourse with Men.

And on this Occasion, that *Worthy and Learned Person* deserves a Particular and Grateful Mention, who hath, by his Eminent Skill, assisted the Hospital

S E R M. tal to be Charitable in This Way, to
II. much greater Numbers of *Lunaticks*,
~~~~ than have been known to be Cured in  
Former Times.

So that this Great Receptacle of Mis-  
erable Objects of every kind, seems to be  
like that Medicinal Pool at *Betheda*,  
where there were Virtues proper for  
every Malady; all Infirmities were equal-  
ly heal'd, in Those, who had the Happi-  
ness to get into it. I can carry the Pa-  
rallel no farther, I thank God. —— For  
the Prudence and Vigilance of its Gover-  
nors, as it hitherto *bath*, so, I question  
not, always *will* take Care, that (Con-  
trary to what happened to the Impotent  
Man in that Story) They who have most  
need of the Pool, shall ever have the  
Happiness to get first into it. Impartial-  
ity is the Soul of Mercy, as well as Justice;  
and adds Farther Degrees of Use and  
Beauty to the most Useful and Beautiful  
Thing in the World.

To give You, therefore, in Little, the  
true Character of this great Benefac-  
tion; As Charity compriseth almost all  
Kinds

Kinds of Virtues; so doth This Foundation take in almost all Sorts of Charities!

11.



But though all the Chief Kinds of Beneficence are her purſu'd, yet many Miserable Objects in Each Kind are not possible to be reach'd, with the present Stock of Charity, which belongs either to this Hospital, or to all Her Other Rivals in This *Labour of Love*. God open the Hands of the Rich, and direct the Hearts of the Merciful, to build upon the Foundation Their Forefathers have laid; and to supply what is wanting, to complete their Designs! Approving Themselves thus, the true Heirs of Their Piety and Bounty, as well as of their Wealth! Else these Great Buildings and Endowments of a former Age, like the Virtuous Acts and Atchievements of the first Founders of Noble Families, will become a Reproach, rather than be an Honour, to a Degenerate and Worthless Posterity.

Consider with Your Selves, how God hath bleſt this City for the sake of the mighty

S E R M. mighty Works that have been done in  
11. Her; I say, for the *sake* of them. — For  
let a Man carry his Thoughts back to  
that Time, when these Good Designs were  
first set on foot, and he shall find, that  
from thence the Rise and Growth of this  
City in Trade, Wealth, Interest, and  
Greatness, is precisely to be dated.

May it grow on, in the same Proportion! and by the same Means also! That is, may there still be found such a Number of Charitable Persons in it, as will continue the Character which hath hitherto belong'd to it; and by That means, secure the Continuation of God's Blessings upon it. May Charity go on *to have its perfect Work*; not Living merely upon the Old Stock, not continuing at a stay; but Growing and Increasing still, as the Necessities of some Men increase, and the Abilities of Others to Relieve them! And thus spreading itself to a wider Compass, it shall assuredly procure a Greater Share of God's Mercies, and *Cover* a greater *Multitude of our Sins.*

*That*

*That this may be the Case, the Good and s E R M.*

*Merciful God grant, through the Great II.  
Steward and Dispenser of his Mercies,  
Christ the Righteous ! To whom, with  
the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be  
ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour,  
Adoration, and Praise, Now, and  
Ever ! Amen!*

---

*The Miraculous Propagation of the Gospel.*

---

A

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

# Q U E E N

A T

*W H I T E - H A L L,*

*October 21, 1694.*

---

I S A I A H lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and  
a Small one a strong Nation : I, the  
Lord, will hasten it, in His Time.*

S E R M. THE Evangelic Prophet is very parti-  
cular, throughout this Chapter,  
in describing the sudden and mighty Increase of Christianity, its triumphant Progress

grefs thro' all Nations, and its Prevalence ~~S E R M.~~  
over all the other Religions of the World. III.  
And this wondrous Enlargement of it he   
takes occasion (at the Close of the Chapter)  
to represent as so much the more Admirable,  
on the account of that Small Appearance  
it should make at first, those Slender and Unpromising Beginnings,  
with which it should set out. *A little one*, says he, in the Words I have read  
to you, *shall become a Thousand; and a*  
*Small one a strong Nation: I, the Lord,*  
*will basten it, in His* (i. e. in the Messiah's) time. From which Words, therefore,  
I shall, without farther Preface, take  
occasion to raise these several Heads of  
Discourse.

*First*, I shall briefly represent to You I.  
the *Matter of Fact* itself, to which this  
Prophecy refers, how  *swift and strange*  
a *Progress the Gospel* made at, and after  
its first setting out from *Jerusalem*.

*Secondly*, I shall prove to you, that this II.  
*Success of it must have been Miraculous,*

VOL. I. G and

S E R M. and owing chiefly to the mighty Operations, and effectual Assurances of the Holy Spirit of God. After establishing which great Truth upon firm and proper Arguments, I shall, in the

- III. *Third* place, fairly lay together what can be offer'd to evade the Force of them; and give the severall *Objections* their *Answers*.
- IV. *Fourthly*, I shall consider, How Great and how distinguishing an *Advantage* this was to the *Christian Institution*, and to what *Useful Ends* and *Purposes* the Consideration of it may be apply'd.
- V. *Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, I shall enquire into the Time *when*, and the Manner *how*, this *Miracle ceas'd*; and make some suitable Reflections upon it, with regard, both to Those who liv'd Then, when this Stop was put to the *Gospel*, and to Us, who live Now, in the latter *Ages* of the *World*.

*First*

*First*, I am to represent to You the S E R M.  
*Matter of Fact* it self, to which the Pro-  
phesy of the Text refers; how  *swift* and  
*strange* a *Progress* the *Gospel* really made  
at, and after its first setting out from  
*Jerusalem*. And the Account of this is  
as much above Imagination, as it is be-  
yond Dispute.

From St. *Luke* we learn, that, upon the Ascent of Our Saviour, the *little Flock*, He had gather'd, consisted of but *One hundred and twenty Disciples*: These receiv'd a mighty Addition to their Number, on the very Day of Pentecost (the Day, on which the *Gospel*, as well as the *Law*, was first *promulg'd*) even on That Day *Three Thousand souls* were brought over to the Faith, by a Sermon of St. *Peter's*: so well did that Spiritual Fisher begin to make good the Character, which Christ had given of him, that *he should catch Men!* After this, *the number of the Disciples mul-* A&s vi. 7. *tiplied in Jerusalem greatly*, saith the same holy Pen, (greatly, even in proportion to

SERM. their first Increase :) and from thence the  
 III. Doctrine was soon carried into all the Re-  
 ↞moter Regions of the Earth ; insomuch  
 that the Book of the *Apostles Acts* (which  
 being written by St. *Luke*, the Companion  
 of St. *Paul*, is chiefly taken up in giving  
 an Account of that particular Apostle's  
 Labours, and Travels ; and of those of  
 them only, which he underwent in the  
 First Years of his Ministry : I say, even  
 this Book itself) doth contain an Account  
 of the spreading of the Gospel, forwards,  
 thro' many Eastern Countries ; and, back-  
 wards, through a great part of the West :  
 of its piercing, on the one side into all  
 the Civiliz'd, and some of the Barbarous  
 Provinces of *Asia* ; and, on the other,  
 as far as the great Metropolis of *Europe*,  
*Rome* itself ; *so mightily grew the Word*  
*of God, and prevailed !*

*Act xix.*  
20.

Indeed, the Writers of the Story of  
 the Church do with one Consent agree,  
 that *Scythia, India, Gaul, and Egypt*, all  
 the most distant Parts of the World Then  
 known had the Doctrine of Christ con-  
 vey'd to them in less than forty Years,

i. e,

i. e. before the Destruction of the Jewish s E R M.  
State by *Titus.*

III.

And what Degree of Success the Voice of these Preachers had in the several Countries, thro' which it sounded, we may learn from the Ancient Apologists, who, ere Two Centuries were as yet run out, pleaded for Christianity, on the account of its vast and incredible Numbers: represented to the Heathen Emperors, that their Courts, their Camps, their Cities, their Provinces, were all full of them, and that it was impossible to extirpate them, without destroying the far Greater Part of their Subjects.

The Gospel is frequently in the New Testament compared to *Light*: and it did in nothing more resemble Light than in This, that, as soon as the Heavenly Doctrine, therein contain'd, arose upon the World, it darted its bright Rays, and diffus'd its quickning Influence from East to West, with an inconceivable Swiftness. This *Kingdom of God came not with Observation, neither could Men say, Lo Here, and Lo there!* That is, (as we

S E R M. may interpret the Words) it did not  
 III. establish itself like other Kingdoms, in  
 a slow and leisurely manner, so as that  
 Lookers-on might trace it easily from  
 its Rise through the several Steps of its  
 Progress; but fix'd itself at once almost  
 every where, with so rapid and amazing  
 a Course, as did, as it were, leave the  
 Eyes and Observation of Men behind it.  
 And still, as it went along, it gain'd  
 mighty Spoils from all Religions, and  
 gather'd vast Multitudes of every Coun-  
 try under its Banners. And, therefore,  
 well did the Founder of this Kingdom

Luke xiii. thus prophesy concerning it: —— *Unto*  
*18, 19,*  
*20, 21.* *what is the Kingdom of God like? And*  
*whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like*  
*a Grain of Mustard-Seed, which a Man*  
*took, and threw into his Garden; and it*  
*grew, and waxed a great Tree: and the*  
*Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches*  
*of it. And again, he said, Whereunto*  
*shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is*  
*like Leaven, which a Woman took, and*  
*hid in three Measures of Meal, until the*  
*Whole was leavened.*

But

But because the Matter of Fact itself, S E R M.  
[That there was such a sudden and pro-  
digious Increase of Converts to Christia-  
nity] is on all Hands so well agreed up-  
on, as to need no solemn Proof: it may  
suffice to have given this short Account  
of it.

III.  


I go on now, in the *Second Place*, to II.  
prove, that this Success of the *Gospel* was  
certainly *miraculous*, and owing *chiefly*  
to the mighty Operations, and effectual  
Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God:  
and that, for this plain Reason; because  
the *Natural* and *Visible* Causes, which  
concurr'd to the Production of this great  
Effect, were not any ways Equal to the  
Effect produc'd; and, therefore, some  
*Supernatural* and invisible Cause must  
needs have given Birth to it.

The *Appearing* Causes and Instruments  
of this Wondrous Revolution were, chief-  
ly, Twelve Men, of obscure Birth and  
Parentage, of the meanest Education, of  
the plainest and simplest Understandings,  
unpolish'd by Learning and Eloquence,

sec<sup>r</sup>m. unimprov'd by Experience and Converse ;

III. Men of no Subtlety, no Art, no Address ;  
~~~ who had no manner of Authority, Interest, or Repute in the World : These Men undertake to convince the World, that one *Jesus*, a Man, who had just before expir'd publickly on a Cross, was the true God, blessed for ever ; and, in Consequence of this, to preach up a Doctrine, the most unwelcome to Flesh and Blood that could be, the most repugnant to Men's natural Desires and Inclinations, to their settled Habits, and inveterate Prejudices ; contrary to the Establish'd Rites and Religions of all Countries, and in all Ages of the World. They set out from *Jerusalem*, with this Design ; they disperse themselves thro' all the Quarters of the Earth ; they succeed every where : and, in a very short time, prevail with great Multitudes, in every Nation, and Kingdom, to submit to the Laws, and to own the Religion of Jesus.

Now, I say, here was no manner of Proportion between the Cause and its Effect ; between

between the Work which was wrought, ~~S E R M.~~
and the Instruments which wrought it: III.
and therefore we may, and must from 
hence conclude, that a Divine Invisible
Power went along with them in every
Step, and *miraculously* bless'd their Endeavours. Which Truth, that it may appear
to you in its full Strength and Evidence,
I shall consider more particularly, which
(naturally speaking) are the best Advantages
for a New Opinion to set up with,
and under what Circumstances it is most
likely to prevail; and I shall shew, that
the Christian Religion was utterly desti-
tute of Every One of these Advantages,
and yet, nevertheless, *did* prevail.

Now there are *Four* Things, that
chiefly conduce towards the spreading of
any new Doctrine, and most remark-
ably make way for its Reception in the
World.

As, *1st*, If the *Principles* of it be suited
to the *Lusts*, the *Interests*, and *Wishes*
of Those, among whom it is to be pro-
pagated.

2dly.

S E R M. *2dly*, If it be supported and countenanced by Persons in Power and Authority, of great Name and Note, if it be either forcibly obtruded upon Men by Sanguinary Laws and Edicts, or more indirectly advanc'd by Art and Management, and the Methods of worldly Prudence.

3dly, If it be first brought into the World in *dark* and *barbarous Ages*, when Men are either too Rude and Illiterate, to be Able to weigh, and dispute the Truth of it, or too much funk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing to do it. Or,

4thly, If it be not proposed to Men, all *at once*, but be insinuated into them by *Degrees*, Secretly, and Insensiblly.

1. As to the *First* of these, it is certain, that nothing recommends a new Doctrine so much, or goes so far towards promoting an Universal Reception of it, as its falling in with the corrupt Desires and Inclinations, the Passions and Prejudices of Men. For Men are, without Difficulty, brought to believe an Opinion true, which they wish true beforehand. And this was the Way in which that

cunning

cunning Impostor, *Mahomet*, set up for S E R M. a new Prophet. He made his Doctrine III. as relishing and palatable as he could; contriv'd it on purpose, so as that it might gratify Mens Lusts and Appetites; and, especially, that it might comply with the loose and wanton Manners of the *East*, where he erected his Standard.

And thus also, ever since, hath Libertinism of all kinds promoted its Interest, and increas'd its Party. False and foolish Opinions have gotten footing, and thriven, in prejudice to true Religion, and sound Morality; because there was something in them, which flatter'd either our Vanity, our Lust, or our Pride, and fell in with a darling Inclination. And to this single Art Mr. *Hobbs* ow'd all his Reputation, and his Followers: it was not his Philosophy, and his boasted Reason, that drew Men in; but the Skill he had in fitting his Principles to Men's Constitutions, and Tempers: He knew what would take, and be lik'd; and he knew how to express it after a taking manner; and no wonder

S E R M. wonder then, if it were greedily enter-
III. tain'd. To talk against receiv'd Opinions,
~~~~ and in behalf of some belov'd Vices, and  
Frailties ; to dress up his Discourse in all  
the natural Beauties of Language, and  
to give it beside the Air (and he gave it  
nothing but the Air) of Demonstration ;  
This, he saw, would be a sure way of  
engaging the Men of Wit and Pleasure  
on his Side ; and This, therefore, he fol-  
low'd with Application and Success ; like  
Luke xvi. 8. one of the *Children of This World, who  
are, in their Generation, wiser than the  
Children of Light.*

But Christianity, when it set out, took  
none of these Methods of recommending  
itself, and enlarging its Interests :  
on the contrary, it propos'd plain, naked  
Truths, without Colours, and Disguises,  
or any regard to what was Agreeable  
and Pleasing. It held forth high and  
inconceivable Mysteries, which the Pride  
of Man would make him apt to sus-  
pect, because he could not perfectly  
comprehend ; and it preach'd up harsh  
and ungrateful Doctrines, which did Viol-  
ence

lence to Men's Natures, and which it was ~~s~~ E R M. death to them to think of entertaining. ~~III.~~  
And yet, I say, under this great Disad-  
vantage it made its way, and prosper'd.  
But,

*2dly*, It is another great Advantage to a rising Opinion, if it be espous'd by Men of Authority, Repute and Parts; who may either force its way into the World by Dint of Power, or bring it about by Arts of Management, and Contrivance. In this manner the Prophet of the East hew'd out his way by the Power of the Sword; took advantage from the Divisions and Weakness of Christendom, to arm a Savage Multitude, and make large Inroads upon it; and, having first brought into Subjection the Bodies of Men, had no hard Task, afterwards, to enslave their Souls.

In like manner the Papal Usurpations often prevail'd; the Bishops of *Rome* got Zealous Princes into their Interest, and made them blindly obedient to the Holy See; and then, by their Help, impos'd their own Decrees upon whole unwilling Provinces

SE R M. Provinces and Kingdoms. And, as some  
III. of their Encroachments thus got footing,  
so many others, we know, were brought  
in, at first, and have been supported ever  
since, by the highest and most refined  
Arts of Policy. That See hath never  
wanted, from the very Moment, since it  
first set up its Pretences, a number of  
skillful Managers, who have continually  
pleaded its Cause, and carried on its  
Interests, with all the Dexterity and Ad-  
dress, with all the Industry and Zeal, of  
which Human Wit is capable: It hath  
ever had the warmest and ablest, (I had  
almost said the wisest) Heads employ'd  
in its Defence; and hath taken care to  
make sure of them, by Bountiful Re-  
wards, dealt out in proportion to their  
Services; and by making a Zeal for the  
Papal Chair, a sure and never-failing Step  
towards all manner of Honours and Ad-  
vantages: and no wonder, therefore, if  
its Delusions have spread so far, and wide,  
and infected such Numbers.

It was much the same case, with re-  
gard to the Broachers of Heresy in the an-  
cient

tient Church ; they were generally leading Men, of some Figure and Repute in the World, of great Wit and Subtlety ; and, by the Help of these, they were able to raise a Dust, and make a Noise ; to form a Party, and set themselves at the Head of it.

But now, when Christianity first appear'd, how weak and defenceless was it, how artless and undesigning ! How utterly unsupported either by the Secular Arm, or Secular Wisdom ! *I send you forth*, said our Saviour to his Apostles, *as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*: And, accordingly, they went forth, in the Spirit of Simplicity, of Humility, and Meekness ; arm'd only with Truth, and Innocence ; a good Cause, and an equal Resolution : *The Weapons of their Warfare were not Carnal, but Spiritual!* The Messengers of these glad Tidings were so far from having a Name in the World, that they were contemptible : were scorned as Jews, by the rest of Mankind ; and as the meanest and lowest of Jews, by the Jews themselves ; and were not likely,

Math x<sup>16</sup>.  
2 Cor. x.  
<sup>4</sup>

SERM. likely, therefore, to credit the high Em-  
III. bassy, on which they came. They left  
their Nets, and their Hooks, (the Only  
things probably, that they understood)  
to come into a New World, wherein  
they were perfect Strangers, and to preach  
a new Gospel, with which all Men were  
unacquainted: and they preached it, not  
to the *Wise*, the *Mighty*, or the *Noble*,  
who, when converted, might have for-  
warded its Reception by their Influence;  
but to the *Foolish*, *Weak*, and *Base*, who  
were able to do nothing for its Advan-  
tage, but by Living according to the  
Rules, and Dying for the Truth of it.  
As they had no Help from the Powers of  
this World, Civil or Military, so had  
they all the Opposition that was possible;  
which they withstood, and baffled: they  
sow'd the good Seed of the Word under  
the very Feet of the *Roman* Magistrates,  
and Soldiers, who, though they trod it  
down, and rooted it up, yet could not  
destroy it so far, but that still it sprang  
out again, and yielded a fruitful and glo-  
rious Harvest. A

3d. Thing, that promotes the Progress & R. M. of a New Religion, is, if it be brought into the World, in Dark and Barbarous Times ; when Men are either too Rude and Illiterate, to be able to weigh, and to dispute the Truth of it, or too much sunk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing to do it. And this, again, cannot but put us in Mind of the *Romish* Superstitions : for it is plain, that they took That time of settling and spreading their Empire, which, of all times since the Coming of *Christ*, was the most Ignorant, and the least Inquisitive ; when Men were Vicious, Lazy, Dispirited, Fearful, and Credulous ; when gross Darkness sat upon the Face of the West ; when the Irruptions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* had destroy'd all the Old Learning, as well as the Old Buildings, and left nothing but Ignorance and Barbarity behind them. Then, in that *Night*, as the Parable speaks, did the cunning *Enemy* come, and sow his *Tares*, when there was no body at Work, or awake to observe him. And, when he had thus covertly sown

ſtr̄m, them, what Wonder was it, that they  
 111. should grow up together with the Corn,  
 ~~~~~ and Flourish?

But did the Gospel make ſuch Advan-
 tages as theſe, of Mens Credulity, and
 Supinenefs? No, it took all ways of
 being Try'd and Examin'd to the utter-
 moft. It alarm'd the World a good while
 before-hand, and gave fair Warning of
 its Approach, by plain Signs, and Predic-
 tions: and if the Prophecies of the Old
 Testament will not be admitted as Proofs
 in this caſe, ſure *Tacitus* and *Virgil* may
 be heard; the firſt of which lays it down
 as a known Truth, that there was (about
 the Time of our Saviour) a strong Tradition,
 thro' all the *Eaſt*, of a certain mighty
 Prince, that was then, and there expected
 to arife, and to govern the World; and
 the Latter, out of the *Sibylline Verſes*,
 transcrib'd ſuch an Account of things,
 as did evidently, and could only belong
 to the Days of the Gospel, and the Reign
 of the Mefiah.

But the moft Obſerveable thing on this
 Head, is, 'that God pitch'd upon that

particular Point of Time, for the Manifestation of his Gospel, when good Sense, and Learning, and Wit, were at the highest; when the *Roman Empire* was in its full Glory, and, together with it, all the Arts and Sciences flourish'd: when the World enjoy'd a profound Peace, and was at Liberty to examine the Truth of an Opinion, which set up with such Pretences: Then did the Glorious Light of the Gospel shine forth, and dazzle the Eyes even of Those, who were thought to see best, and farthest. And soon afterwards the Apostles open'd their Heavenly Commission, and executed it publickly; challenging those who look'd on, with all their Curiosity, Subtlety, and Spite, to disprove, or blemish it. The Doctrine of the Cross shew'd itself bare-faced to all the Wits and Sages of both, *Rome* and *Athens*; and defy'd their Doubts, and their Reasonings. And yet, under These discouraging Circumstances also, it took Root downwards, and brought forth Fruit upwards, speedily, and abundantly. A

S E R M. 4th Help towards establishing any
III. New Opinions in Religion is, if they be
not propos'd to Men all at Once, but
insinuated into them only by insensible
Steps and Degrees: and this Method hath
often made way for the Belief of the most
monstrous Doctrines, and the Entertain-
ment of the wildest Absurdities. Witness
[once more] several Articles in the *Roman*
Catbolick Faith; which, had they been
offer'd to the Minds of Men, at first, in
their full Latitude, had been rejected with
Indignation and Horror; but being pro-
pos'd at half Views, and advanc'd by little
and little, were also gradually admitted
by Men, not well aware of their Ut-
most Import and Tendency: every first
Step into Error smoothing the Way to-
ward a second, and so on, till the Pas-
sage was widen'd enough for the Grossest
Contradictions to enter in at it.

Far from this Artificial Method of
winning Belief, was the Religion of *Je-
sus*: Upon its first Appearance, after the
Descent of the Holy Ghost, it offer'd it-
self to the View of Men, at full length,
and

and in all its Proportions. No Moral s E R M.
Precept was reserv'd for a more Conve- 111.
nient Time, no Doctrine (no Great, Fun-
damental Doctrine) was disguis'd, or
conceal'd. The Message it brought, it
deliver'd, plainly and openly, at once;
the most unwelcome Practical Truths,
as well as Those, which were better
Known, and receiv'd; the Sublimest
Points of Faith, together with such as
were more Easy and Credible.

The Primitive Apostles did not, like
those of a Latter Date, the Fathers of the
Mission of *China*, preach up first a *Glorify'd*, and then a *Crucify'd* Saviour; but
bore the Scandal of the Cross whereso-
ever, and to whomsoever they open'd
the Doctrines of it: The *slaying* of *Je-
sus*, and his being *hang'd on a Tree*, is Act v. 30.
mention'd in one of the first Sermons of
St. Peter. This (humanly speaking) was
an Unlikely way of gaining Proselytes;
and yet, as unlikely a Way as it was, Thus
were innumerable Proselytes gain'd.

Let us lay together what hath been
said:—The Gospel of *Christ*, at its

S E R M. Earliest Appearance, had all the Probabilities in the World against its Success :
for it was possess'd scarce of any One of those Advantages, which do most signal-ly recommend a new Doctrine, and make it thrive. It had no complying Tenets, to sooth Mens Appetites and Passions ! but was all Harsh and Austere. It had no Encouragement, no Protection from the Civil Power ; no Force, or Cunning to uphold it, no Men of Eminence, and Esteem to engage on its Side. The Age, which was pitch'd upon for the Discov-ery of it, was more discerning and en-lightned, more curious and inquisitive, than, perhaps, any that either preceded or follow'd it : and therefore the Succes of this Doctrine could not be owing to Mens Ignorance or Supineness. Finally, its Promulgators deliver'd it not out by Parcels, as is the Way of Cunning and Designing Men ; but offer'd the Whole of it to be all together examined, and compared. Nevertheless, though press'd with All These Clogs and Incumbrances, it sprang forth, and made its Way into the

the World, by a swift and incredible S E R M.
Progress.

III.

The Inference from hence is plain and indubitable; That a Divine Power and Virtue certainly went along with it, to supply what was Wanting to it, upon Other Accounts; and that its *Increase* must needs have been *Supernatural*, and *Miraculous*: so that, were we acquainted with nothing more, concerning the Apostles, than what the Four Evangelists have left us; were the Book of their *Acts* lost, and, together with it, an Account of the wondrous Effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them, at the Day of Pentecost; and of the mighty Signs and Wonders, which they afterwards perform'd, in Virtue of that Unction: I say, were we in the Dark to all these Transactions, which declare the Christian Religion to have been *propagated* by *Miracle*; yet still every Considering Man must think, that there was somewhat *Miraculous* in it. Such an Increase, from such Beginnings; such a wonderful Revolution, brought about

~~SERM.~~ by such weak and disproportion'd Instruments; is itself a *Miracle*, and the greatest of Miracles; and doth as evidently assure us, that the Preaching of the Apostles was in the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, as if we had heard them speaking Strange Tongues, seen them healing the Blind and Lame, and reviving the Dead.

III. In which Truth, that we may be yet farther confirm'd, let us consider (as I propos'd in the *Third Place,*) what Shifts the Enemies of the Gospel make use of, to evade the Force of this pressing Argument. And the utmost that any of them pretend to say, is, as follows: 'Tis true, they will own, Christians multiply'd very fast, and the Increase of them was, in some Sense, *Miraculous*: That is, it was *wonderful*; as every Unusual Thing is to Those, who do not know, or consider the Causes of it. But to a Man, they say, who dares to go out of the Common Road, and to think for himself, it will appear, that there was at that time a Set
of

of *Natural Causes* on foot, sufficient ~~S E R M.~~
to account for this Effect, without any ~~III.~~
recourse to a *Divine* and *Supernatural* 
Agent. The Apostles indeed were twelve
plain Illiterate Men, who had not, of
Themselves, Force, or Skill enough, to
bring about such an Event: but their
Natural Inability was supply'd by a favour-
able Juncture, by an happy Coincidence
of such conspiring Causes, and Acci-
dental Advantages, as mightily help'd on
the Work. For Example,

The *Sufferings* of those poor bigotted
Creatures, the *Martyrs*, made mighty
Impressions upon Men; especially upon
those of the same Rank with the Suf-
ferers, the Common People; who never
fail to take the side of the Oppress'd, and
to think That Cause good (let it be what
it will) for the Profession of which Men
are us'd ill. Then, the *Purity of the Christian Morals* was a mighty Argument to
bring the Men of Probity and Virtue in-
to the Interests of the Gospel. And so like-
wise was the *Analogy* of some of its *Mysti-
cal Truths*, to the *Doctrines of Plato*,
(then)

S E R M. (then in great Esteem and Vogue) a very
III. good Bait to the Men of Philosophy, and
~~~~~ Learning. The *Distribution of Goods*,  
which the first Christians made, and their  
Living together in Common, was a good  
Reason for many Mens embracing that  
Faith, which, they were sure, would  
maintain them. The Casual *Cessation*  
*of Oracles* was immediately turn'd to the  
Advantage of the Religion of *Christ*, as if  
*That* had procur'd it. And the *Destruction*  
*of the Jewish State* contributed greatly  
to the Increase of the Christian Numbers;  
because it seem'd to have been fore-  
told by the Founder of their Faith: and  
therefore, luckily coming to pass about  
that time, rais'd an high Opinion in  
Men of his Person, and Doctrine; and  
inclin'd them to think, that his Institu-  
tion, then newly set up, was design'd  
by God to succeed in the Room of the  
*Jewish Establishment*, which, about the  
same time, happen'd to be pull'd down. In  
the mean while, the *Rulers of the World*  
*overlook'd*, and *neglected to crush*, a Doc-  
trine, which was so harmless in itself,  
and

and so unlikely to succeed, on the Ac-  
count of its Abettors; till, thro' Their Connivance, it was at last Universally receiv'd among the Vulgar Sort, and the Number of its Votaries was grown so formidable, that even Princes themselves were forc'd, for their own Ease and Interest to come into it, and profess it.

And thus, say they, several extraordinary and unheeded Advantages concurring to favour the Growth of Christianity, it *grew indeed mightily, and prevail'd*; as a little River will swell high, and spread itself wide, and run far, when swoln by Casual Rains, and by many other Streams, which have emptied themselves at once into it. Such is the Account they pretend to give of the Rise and Progress of our Faith, from *second Causes*, without calling *a first*, to solve the Appearance.

In opposition to these Pretences, I will shew, that the Causes here assign'd, were utterly insufficient to produce the Event, for which they are assign'd: a short Review of them, I think, (and the Time will

S E R M. will allow of but a short one) will easily  
III. satisfy us concerning it.

The *Blood of the Martyrs* was, indeed, what it hath been often styl'd, the *Seed of the Church*: But how? Not, certainly, by alluring Men to the Profession of Christianity, at the Time *when* those Martyers suffer'd; for nothing could have a greater Tendency to frighten and discourage Men from professing the Gospel, than to find, that they should be persecuted, and must die for it. This only is meant by that Saying, and thus far it holds good; That the Sufferings and Torments, which the first Christians underwent so willingly and bravely, were a strong Evidence of the Truth of that Doctrine, which could inspire its Followers with so much Courage, Constancy, and Patience; and dispos'd Men mightily to embrace the Religion of Christ *afterwards*, in better and more quiet Times. But before that this Motive could have any considerable Force and Influence, the Gospel had *already* spread

spread and settled itself every where : s E R M .  
and therefore nothing can well be ac- III.  
counted for by it, but the Accession   
which was made to Christianity, *after* it  
was sufficiently establish'd ; and This, we  
are ready to confess, had nothing Extra-  
ordinary in it, nor are we at present ma-  
king any Enquiries concerning it.

The same Answer serves to disprove  
that Other pretended Account of this In-  
crease, drawn from the *Destruction of the*  
*Jewish State*. We allow it to have ad-  
ded to the Numbers of Christian Con-  
verts, *when* it happen'd ; but it happen'd  
not till near forty Years after the Death of  
*Christ* ; and by that time, Christianity was  
strong enough of itself, and needed no  
Aids. And, even when this Event hap-  
pen'd, tho' several *Jews* promoted the  
Interests of the Gospel, by embracing the  
Faith, yet the Obstinate Part of them,  
which stood out, did it much more harm  
than the Proselytes did it good. For the  
uncomplying *Jews* were not satisfy'd  
with rejecting Christianity themselves ;  
but

S E R M. but made it their Busines to render it  
III. odious, suspected, and contemptible to  
the Heathens also, in all the Corners  
of the Earth, to which they were dri-  
ven.

The *Purity of the Christian Morals*, and the answerable Lives of Christian Converts, did indeed very naturally lead Men to admire and value the Doctrine of Christ; but by no means, to come under the Yoke of it: for tho' Most Men have an Esteem for strict Rules, and strict Livers; yet Few care to practise the one, or to imitate the other. And nothing, I think, could be contriv'd so effectual, (next to the former wise Motive from the Sufferings of the Martyrs) to deter Men from Christianity, as to tell them, that, when they took it upon them, they must renounce their dearest Appetites, and Passions, and deny their very Selves. And I desire the Men, who raise these Objections against the Divine Original of the Gospel, to tell us fairly; Whether, if they had liv'd at that time, they would have come in upon *This Principle*?

ciple? I am sure, they would not; because ~~SE R M.~~  
it is *This* Principle alone, [that they must ~~III.~~  
part with their unlawful Satisfactions, and ~~III.~~  
Pleasures, if they do] which keeps them  
out of it now. Therefore, neither can  
This be any sufficient Reason for the sud-  
den and wide Growth of Christianity.

The *Analogy of some mystical Truths  
in the Gospel to the Doctrine of Plato*,  
is yet a weaker Plea. For this Motive is  
calculated to touch but very few, only  
the Philosophers of the *Academic* School.  
And with such, it could have no Great  
Weight, surely; or, at least, not enough  
to over-balance that Scorn and Con-  
tempt, with which, on other accounts,  
they treated the Christian Religion, and  
its Promulgators; That, for its short, Un-  
philosophical way of proposing Truths,  
without Demonstration, or Reasoning;  
and Those, for their Ignorance, and the  
Meanness of their Education. Accord-  
ingly, we find not that the Sublime My-  
steries of our Faith made any Impression  
on these haughty Reasoners: St. *Paul*  
was derided at *Athens*, when he propos'd  
them;

S E R M. them ; nor can we certainly learn that  
III. any one Philosopher, of Note, embrac'd  
our Religion, till it had been for many  
Years preached, and disseminated, and  
had taken deep root in the World.

The *Casual Cessation of Oracles* (as 'tis call'd) about the Time of promulging the Gospel, was not Casual, but the direct and genuine Effect of it : and, we own, had Men understood it to be so Then, and imputed the Total Silence of those Oracles to its True Cause, such a Persuasion would have been very useful towards bringing in the Heathen World to the Acknowledgment of *Christ*. But we deny that they did at all understand, or allow it to be so. And for a plain Proof of this, we refer ourselves to that Celebrated Discourse in *Plutarch*, about the Reasons of this Cessation ; where, among Many, which that Learn'd Man assigns for it, (vain Reasons indeed, and such as shew him to have been at a Loss for the True One !) This of the Coming of *Christ* is not mention'd, or hinted at : tho' he gives there such an Account  
of

of things, that a Christian might easily S E R M. prove, from what *He* relates, that it was III. really the Coming of Christ which effected it. But this is a Point of too important and nice a nature to be settled incidentally, and might well deserve to be consider'd in an entire Discourse.

Again, neither can any probable Account be given of this matter, from the *Charitable Distribution of their Goods, which the first Christians made.* For, supposing that some of the poorer sort might be tempted by this Motive; yet, surely, those who had wherewithal to sustain themselves, and were easy in their Circumstances, did not come in upon it: It will not be said, I hope, that such as *made* this Distribution of their Goods (which will be found to have been an inconsiderable Number) came in themselves to *partake* of it. Nor could these Hopes have any Great Influence, even on the meaner sort; since there was something in the Christian Religion, of far more force to frighten them, than This was to allure them; the strict Rules

S E R M. of Honesty and Temperance, according  
III. to which they were bound to live, and  
the great Calamities and Persecutions,  
which they were sure to undergo.

*Lastly*, No Weight can be laid, in this Case, on that *Contempt*, which *Heathen Princes* are said to have had of the *Christian Religion*, and the little Care they, therefore, took to restrain it: for it is not true, that they stood by unconcerned at its Growth; on the contrary, it is certain, that they look'd upon it with a jealous Eye, from its first Rise; and the Early Persecutions of *Nero* (not to mention those of *Domitian*, which were after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*) shew, that he took great notice of it, and endeavour'd to Extirpate it. However, let the *Roman Emperors* have been never so regardless of its Increase; yet it is certain that they did no ways Countenance it; and that every one, who turn'd Christian, was sure by that means to forfeit the Favour of his Prince, and to be look'd upon as an Apostate from the Religion.

Religion of his Country. And how, s E R M. even under such a Pressure as this, could III. Christianity have made so rapid and  astonishing a Progress, if He, who is mightier than the mightiest, had not bid it *go forth and prosper* against all Human Discouragements? Had *this Counsel, or this Work been of Men*, it would, even without any direct Opposition from the Temporal Power, have certainly *come to nought*, as *Gamaliel argu'd*; but *being of God, nothing could overthrow it*.

I do not deny, after all, but that Every one of these Particulars might, in a natural way, contribute somewhat, either to the Planting, or Spreading of the Gospel. But I think it is evident, from the short Hints I have suggested to you, that All them together were not able to do the thousandth Part of that Work which is allotted to them. And, therefore, to resolve this Great Event into a *Conspiracy of second Causes*, as 'tis call'd, without any regard to the *first*, is an absurd and senseless Attempt; and only shews us, how very strong an In-

S E R M. cination and Bias there is in Some  
III. Minds towards Infidelity, which they  
can be brought to espouse upon so very  
flight Grounds.

A Man, who should see an Acorn put into the Earth, and perceive in a few Weeks, or Months, an Oak shooting up from it to a prodigious height, and spreading its Branches to an amazing Extent, so as to over-top the loftiest Mountains, and even to cover the whole Field where it grew; might as well say, that there was a strange *Conspiracy of Natural Causes*, an extraordinary Degree of Warmth, Moisture, and so forth, which concurr'd to produce this Effect; as affirm, that the vast Success of the Gospel was owing to those *petty Principles*, from whence Some Men pretend to derive it.

But it must be granted to them, that their thoughts are of a piece, and that this Opinion of theirs falls in with the rest of their System. For their Account of the *New Creation* by Jesus Christ, is much like that which they give of the

*Old*

*Old one.* It was a Lucky Hit of concurring Causes which propagated Christianity. And it was a Lucky Hit also of dancing Atoms, which first made the World: and 'tis the same Lucky Hit, which still preserves and governs it too. They, who can bring themselves to believe the Latter of these Opinions, may, consistently enough, be suppos'd to entertain the Former: But, certainly, no other Creature, but an Atheist by Complexion, could ever take up with such pitiful Accounts of Things.

Well then, The Christian Religion, from small and weak Beginnings, spread itself far, and wide, after a sudden and strange Manner; and this it did, against all Probability, and contrary to all the Rules of Success, which all other Rising Opinions have ever set up with: It had no One of those great Advantages, some of which recommend every new Sect, that stands, and prevails: and, as for all other Lesser Helps, and Assurances towards its Increase, which the Wit of Man can assign; they are appa-

S E R M. rently too weak to sustain the Weight

III. that is laid on them. It remains, therefore, that this wondrous Effect sprang undoubtedly from the immediate Influence of the First Cause, actuating after an Extraordinary manner the Industry, and blessing the Endeavours of the Apostles ; stirring up the Minds of Men to attend to, and disposing their Hearts to embrace the Truths of the Gospel ; in a Word, accompanying all they said, and did, with mighty Signs and Wonders, with the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.*

I have fully consider'd *Three* of the *Five* Points, on which I intended to discourse ; having represented to You,

*First*, The Matter of Fact itself to which the Prophecy of the Text refers ; how swift and strange a Progress the Gospel really made, at, and after its first setting out from *Jerusalem* : Having prov'd to You,

*Secondly*, That this Success of it must have been *Miraculous*. After which I did, in the

*Third*

*Third Place,* fairly lay together what I s E R M. thought might be offered to evade the III. Force of this Argument; and gave the several Objections their Answers. It remains that I should consider,

*Fourthly,* How great and how distinguishing an Advantage this brings to the Christian Institution; and to what Useful Ends and Purposes the Consideration of it may be apply'd: And then,

*Lastly,* Enquire into the Time wher, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make some suitable Reflection upon it, with regard both to Those who liv'd Then, when this Stop was put to the Gospel, and to Us who live now in the Latter Ages of the World.

But the handling of these two Points must be the Work of a Second Discourse.

---

## P A R T II.

---

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and  
a Small one a strong Nation : I the  
Lord will batten it in His Time.*

SERMON. IV. **O**f the *Five Points* which I pro-  
pos'd, from these Words, to han-  
dle, *Three* have been consider'd : I come  
now, in the

*Fourth* place, to shew, How great,  
and how *distinguishing* an *Advantage*  
it is to the Christian Institution, to have  
been propagated after so swift and unac-  
countable a manner ; to what useful  
*Ends* and *Purposes* the Consideration of  
it may be apply'd. And,

1st, This is, I say, an Advantage peculiar to the Christian Institution : For no other Religion ever had so large an Increase, with so little of Human Aid and Assistance ; or prevail'd in such a manner, as to make a Recourse to Supernatural Influences necessary, in order to explain the Success of it. This may be collected, in great measure, from what hath been already hinted, in the preceding Discourse. However, I shall here resume the Reflection, and more particularly and fully evince the Truth of it.

Of all false Religions, the *Mahometan* came nearest to the Christian, in the swift manner of its Propagation ; for in a small time it over-ran a great part of the Eastern World. But this Success, how extraordinary soever, had nothing miraculous in it ; nothing, but what may easily be accounted for, by reflecting on the Circumstances (already intimated) with which the Propagation of that Imposture was attended : Such, as the loose Manners, and lamentable Divisions of the Christians of that time ; the Suitableness of

S E R M. of *Mahomet's* Doctrine to the sensual Inclinations of Men, especially of those Eastern People, to whom it was first address'd; and the Method he us'd of procuring Submission to it, by the Dint of the Sword, not by the Power of Persuasion and Argument. A Religion, that gave a full Indulgence to the Ambition, the Lusts, and Cruelty of Mankind, could not fail of gaining Profelytes; and, when a Warlike and a Savage Race of Men, united by the Hopes of Rapine and Spoil, set upon a dissolute, divided, and weakened Enemy (as the Christians then were) the Success of such an Enterprise was sure and easy: and on the Success of *Mahomet's* Arms the Success of his Religion depended, When, by an uninterrupted Course of Victories, he had laid the Foundation of the *Saracen Empire*, it was no wonder that a new Empire should be able to introduce a new Religion; the Increase of the One, was naturally follow'd by a proportionable Enlargement of the Other: which, therefore, I say, had nothing *miraculous* in it;

it; nothing, that rival'd, or any ways resembled the Success of the *Gospel*— IV.  
that *Stone*, which was cut out of the <sup>Dan. ii.</sup> Mountain, without Hands (*i. e.* without visible Causes and Instruments, proportion'd to such a Work) and brake in Pieces all other Kingdoms, and at last became itself a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth.

As to the *Jewish* Religion, it will not admit of any Comparison with the *Christian*, either as to the Manner of its first Reception, or the Addition of Converts afterwards made to it. It was given to the *Israelites*, by *Moses*, in the Wilderness, whither he had led them out of the House of Bondage in their Way to a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. Now, (setting aside the Consideration of *Miracles* by which the *Jewish* and Christian Dispensations were alike confirm'd) the Reception of the *Law* by the *Israelites* from such a Deliverer, under whose Conduct and Command they then entirely were, and in a Place, where they had no Communication with the rest of the World, had

S E R M. had nothing in it near so wonderful as the  
I V. first Plantation of the Christian Church  
~~~~~ by means of the Apostles Preaching. And,  
as to the Acceffion of Gentile-Converts,
after the Tabernacle was set up in *Sibi-
lob*; it was too small and inconsiderable,
to give the Religion of the *Jews* any
Title, or Pretension to a Divine Ori-
nal, on *that* Account.

The narrow Limits of the *Jewish*
Church are thus, under the Emblem of
a transplanted Vine, aptly represented by
the Psalmist. *Thou hast brought* (says he)
a Vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out
*the Heathen, and planted it; Thou pre-
paredst Room for it, and didst cause it to*
take deep Root, and it filled the Land,
viz. the Land of *Jewry*, wherein it was
set. *The Hills* (*i. e.* the Hill-Country
of *Judah*, the farthest Point of *Palestine*,
Southward) *were covered with the Sha-
dow of it, and the Bougbs thereof were*
*like the Cedars of God, on Mount Leba-
non*, in the Extremity of its Northern
Borders. *She sent out her Bougbs into*
the Sea (the *Mediterranean Sea*, her ut-
most

most Limit to the West) *and her Branches* S E R M. to the River, even as far Eastward as the 1 V. River Euphrates. Thus was the Jewish ^{Pf. lxxx. 8.} Church, even in its most ample and ^{9, 10, 11.} flourishing Condition, shut up within the Bounds of Canaan, and the Countries adjacent: Whereas that Mustard-Seed, the Kingdom of Christ, though it were less than all the Seeds that be in the Luke xiiij. Earth, yet, when it was sown, it grew ^{19.} Mark iv. up, and became greater than all the ^{31, 32.} Herbs, and shot out great Branches, and the Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches of it; Men of all Countries, and all Religions under Heaven flock'd to it for Shade and Shelter.

Indeed, the Mosaic Law was intended for a single People only, who were to be shut in, as it were, from the rest of the World, by a Fence of Legal Rites, and Typical Ceremonies; and to be kept by that Means separate and unmix'd, till the great Antitype, the Messiah, should appear, and break down this Fence, and lay open this Inclosure, publishing a Religion of a more extensive Nature

S E R M. Nature and Use, which all Mankind
IV. should be invited to profess, and in which
all would have an equal Interest. To
these different Ends the *Law*, and the
Gospel, were severally design'd ; and to
these, therefore, the different Circum-
stances of their Promulgation, and the
chief Parts of their Worship, were seve-
rally accommodated. The Law was
(as I said) given in the Desert, to a parti-
cular People ; the Gospel was publish'd
in *Jerusalem*, before a mixt Multitude
of various Nations and Languages. The
Miracles, by which the Law was con-
firm'd, were done before the *Jews* only,
who alone were concern'd in them [for
as to those perform'd by *Moses* in the
Sight of *Pharaob* and the *Egyptians*,
they were not intended to authorize the
Law, which was not as yet given, but
only to prove his Divine Mission for the
Temporal Rescue of that People :] Whereas
the Gospel-Miracles were wrought be-
fore the Enemies of the Gospel, in all
Countries ; because in all Countries the
Gospel was to be propagated, believ'd, and

practis'd. The chief Parts of the Jewish s E R M. Worship (which consisted in Sacrifices) IV. were confin'd to a certain Place, at  which all the Males of that Religion were bound, thrice every Year, to appear; and that Religion, therefore, could be intended for such only as liv'd at no great Distance from the Jewish Temple: Whereas, when the Ends of the Earth were to be converted to Christ, the Christian Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, and even the great Oblation of the Eucharist, was to be perform'd everywhere with equal Degrees of Acceptance, according to the Prediction of *Malachi*, the last Prophet of the Jewish Dispensation. *For from the rising of the Sun to Mal. . . . the going down of the same, my Name^{xi} shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every Place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The Jewish, then, and Christian Institutions, as they are widely different in many Respects, so particularly in This; that

S E R M. that the one was, by its original Frame
 iv. and Intention, limited as to Place, Persons,
 ~~~~~ and Time: Whereas the other was  
 to be diffus'd throughout the World,  
 and to endure together with it; that is,  
 to be, indeed, what we find it not long  
 after its first Erection styl'd, the *Catholic*  
 Luke iv. *Church.* *Whereunto,* therefore, *shall we*  
 30. *liken this Kingdom of God,* and its mar-  
 vellous Increase? or with what Compari-  
 sion *shall we compare it?* There is, indeed,  
 some faint Resemblance of it in the pro-  
 digious Fecundity of *Seeds;* which, ac-  
 cordingly, our Saviour makes use of more  
 than once, to illustrate it: but there is  
 nothing parallel to it in the History of  
 all the Religions which have sprung up,  
 and obtain'd amongst Men, from the Be-  
 ginning of the World to this Day.

And this *peculiar* Advantage of Chris-  
 tianity is so much the more remarkable,  
 because,

*2dly,* It was presignify'd by *Types,* and  
 foretold by various *Prophecies.* And  
 when, therefore, the Event came to pass,  
 it did, as it were, point out its Author,  
 and

and declare itself to spring from Him, S E R M.  
who alone knoweth and ordereth the I V.  
*Times and the Seasons, and calleth the*   
*things that are not, as if they were.*

Of Types, the most illustrious, and most worthy of our present Consideration, is That, which relates to the wonderful Increase of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt*, concerning which the Sacred Story speaks in very expressive and emphatical Language : *T*hey were fruitful (*says Moses*) E x o d . i . 7 and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the Land was filled with them ; and this (it seems) notwithstanding the Arts that were us'd to lessen their Numbers, notwithstanding the great Hardships and Severities that were laid upon them : For again it is said, *T*he more the *Ægyptians* afflicted them, I b . v . 1 2 the more they multiplied and grew. A livelier Image than which there cannot be of the thriving Estate of the Christian Church, under all the Cunning and Malice of its Heathen Persecutors. Were the Seed of *Abraham* few, when they first came to sojourn in *Ægypt*? no more than

S E R M. *seventy* Souls? The Number of the first

iv. Disciples of *Christ*, on the Day of Pen-  
tecost, when his Gospel began to be pro-  
pagated, was not much greater. Did the  
several Kings of *Ægypt* keep a jealous  
Eyc over the Children of *Israel*, and take  
all manner of unjust and cruel Methods  
to prevent their Increase? Just so fared it  
with the earliest Professors of the Gospel;  
the Rulers of the World harraf'd and op-  
pres'd them, and did what they could to  
crush Christianity, in its first Seeds, by  
severe Edicts and Penalties, and subtle  
Contrivances. Did the *Israelites* thrive  
nevertheless, and multiply exceedingly;  
so as, in the Space of four hundred and  
thirty Years, from the time of the Co-  
venant made with *Abraham*, to come  
out of *Ægypt* above six hundred thou-  
sand strong, that were Men from twenty  
Years old and upwards, besides Women  
and Children, and a mixt Multitude,  
not rank'd into distinct Tribes and Fami-  
lies, that were without Number? The  
Increase of Christian Converts was yet  
more wonderful; and attended with this  
remark-

remarkable Circumstance of Resemblance, s E R M.  
that it came to its utmost Pitch, near IV.  
the same Period of Time, to wit, about  four hundred and thirty Years after our  
Saviour had begun to preach and to say,  
*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is  
at hand.* Such a strict Correspondence  
there was between these Events, that  
we may justly reckon the one of them,  
as designed to prefigure and typify the  
other. Especially, since the Promise  
made to *Abraham*, about the Fertility  
of his Descendants, was so worded by  
God, as at once to include the Increase  
of his *Natural* and *Spiritual* Seed, and  
plainly to point out that Access of Con-  
verts from all Nations to the Church,  
which should happen in the Days of the  
*Messiah.* *In blessing I will bless thee,*  
said God, *and in multiplying I will*  
*multiply thy Seed, as the Stars of the*  
*Heaven, and as the Sand which is up-*  
*on the Sea-shore. And in thy Seed (i. e.*  
*in Christ, the promis'd Seed) shall all*  
*the Nations of the Earth be blessed.*  
God begins, we see, with the Assurance

SER.M. of a Temporal Blessing, a numerous

iv. Off-spring, according to the Flesh, and  
 ends with the future Enlargement of the  
 Spiritual Kingdom of *Christ*; the for-  
 mer of these being indeed a Figure on-  
 ly, or Mystical Emblem of the latter,  
 to which this Divine Promise chiefly  
 referr'd, and in which it was finally and

Gal. iii. 8. fully accomplish'd. *For the Scripture,*  
*foreseeing that God would justify the*  
*Heathen through Faith, preached be-*  
*fore the Gospel unto Abraham, saying,*  
*In Thee shall all Nations be blessed.*

The same Promise was afterwards ex-  
 Gen. xxvi. presly renew'd to *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but

4 to none other of the succeeding Patriarchs:

And from *these*, alone, therefore, God  
 xxviii. 18. took his *Title*, and vouchsafed to be  
 call'd the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and  
*Jacob*; because to *these* alone he had  
 made the Promise of that *Seed*, *in whom*  
*all the Nations of the Earth should be*  
*blessed*, by being ingrafted into his Church,  
 and becoming the Subjects of his Spiritual  
 Kingdom.

Many Predictions of the same kind are s E R M. to be met with in the *Psalms*, and the IV. *Prophecy*; particularly in *Isaiah*; his 1x<sup>th</sup> Chapter is nothing else but a Description of the glorious State of the Christian Church, upon the abundant Access of the *Gentiles*: And he closes that Prophecy as we have heard, with the *Text*, which in few Words comprises the small Appearance the Gospel should make at first, the vast Increase it should afterwards receive, and the speedy manner in which it should take place: *A little one shall become a Thousand, and a small one a great Nation; I the Lord will hasten it in His time*: In the *Messiah's* time this great Event shall come to pass; and, when it begins, it shall be *hastened*; it shall proceed with an astonishing and irresistible Swiftness, until it be fulfill'd.

If then the victorious Progress of the Christian Faith be in itself a sufficient Evidence of its Divine Original; that Argument must needs be somewhat heightned and improv'd, by considering, that the Spirit of Prophecy had long before

S E R M. signify'd and promis'd this Success : For  
IV. from the same Spirit, from which the  
Prophecy came, the Completion of, it  
afterwards proceeded. I add,

3dly. That the Advantage peculiar in  
this respect to Christianity, doth from  
hence also appear, in that the wondrous  
Success of the Gospel confirms the *Truth*  
of those *Miracles*, by which it is said to  
have been planted, and frees the Account  
of them from all possible Suspicion of  
Mistake, or Imposture.

The only Way that Infidelity hath left,  
to escape the Force of the Argument  
drawn from Miracles, is, by denying the  
Truth of the Facts. How unreasonable  
and absurd a Plea this is, may be shewn  
many ways, particularly from hence :  
That they, who deny the Credibility of  
the Gospel-Miracles, must allow some-  
what else, altogether as incredible ; to  
wit, that the Gospel was propagated in-  
to all the Regions, and subdu'd all the  
Religions of the World, without Mi-  
racles, which, considering the Meanness  
and Incompetency of the Instruments,  
that

that wrought this Effect, is itself a Mi- s E R M.  
racle, and the greatest of Miracles \*.

IV.

In vain, therefore, do some Men re-  
ject the Account of the Miracles done by  
the Apostles, if they admit (and they  
cannot but admit) the Account of the  
extensive and swift Propagation of the  
Gospel by the Apostles Means; for the  
one of these Accounts evidently confirms  
and establishes the other. The very Ex-  
istence of the World is a Proof, that it  
was at first miraculously created; and  
so, even the Existence of the Christian  
Religion (as at present spread and pro-  
fess'd in the World) is a Proof, that it  
was at first miraculously planted. For  
the second Creation by *Christ Jesus*, can  
no more be accounted for by Natural  
Causes, than the first; and carries in it

\* Πῶς, δι μά σημεῖα ἴνοισι, ἔπειθος; οἱ μὲν ἴνοισι, θεῖ  
δύναμις ἡ· οἱ δὲ μὴ ἴνοισι, καὶ ἴνεργοις, πολὺ θαυμα-  
τότεροι ἢ τὰ συμβαντα. Chryl. in 1 Cor. cap. 1. "Οταν λέ-  
γωσι μὴ γενίσθαι σημεῖα, μηδένας ἱεροῦς πιθαπτεῖσθεντος·  
τοῦτο γαρ μάγνησι σημεῖα, τὸ, χρεῖς σημεῖων, τὸ εἰκουμέ-  
νη περιστέρητη ἄποστολος, ὃν διδοκει τίνοις καὶ σύγχρι-  
μάτων ἀνθεύποντα ἀλισθῆσσα. Id. in Act. cap 1.

SE R M. as evident Marks and Impressions of an  
IV. Omnipotent Power.

Now this is such a Proof of the Reality of the Apostles Miracles, as is wanting to those wrought for the Establishment of the Law of *Moses*; the Authority of which stands solely on the Authority of External Testimony, and the Traditional Belief of the Jewish Nation; but we have no Internal Evidence of their Truth from the Nature and Reason of the Event. This way of Proof is particular to the Gospel-Miracles; the Account of which comes to us, not merely as Matter of Historical Truth, but as in itself demonstratively certain; because Miracles were necessary towards diffusing the Gospel in that speedy and effectual manner, wherein it is confess'd to have been propagated, And, where an End cannot be obtain'd, without particular Means, the visible Accomplishment of the End is a sure Proof that those Means must have been employ'd, which were necessary towards attaining it. The Jewish Worship might possibly have been erected by *Moses* in *Canaan*,

Canaan, though he had wrought no one ~~S E R M.~~  
Miracle to confirm it. The Christian <sup>IV.</sup>  
Faith could not *possibly* have taken Place ~~in~~  
in all the World, unless Miracles had made  
way for it: And the Truth, therefore,  
of the Gospel-Miracles, is doubly cer-  
tain to us, both from the Authority of  
Testimony, and from the Reason of the  
Thing, which gives a mighty Advan-  
tage to them over those of *Moses*, and  
cuts off all possible Occasions and Pre-  
tences of Distrust from the Infidel, and  
the Gainsayer.

Thus much to shew, " How great  
" and how distinguishing an Advantage  
" it is to the Christian Institution, to  
" have been propagated after so swift and  
" unaccountable a manner, as we find  
" it was." It remains, that I should shew  
likewise,

" To what useful Ends and Purposes  
" This Consideration may be apply'd.

*T*hree Things there are, which we may  
plainly learn from it. For it enables us  
to give a clear Account,

S E R M. I. Why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*  
 IV. and the utter Extermination of the *Jews*,  
 ~~~~~ was delay'd till forty Years after the Death  
 of our Saviour.

2. Why Miracles ceas'd so soon in the Christian Church, when they were continu'd so long in that of the *Jews*; even as long at least as their first Temple lasted.

3. Why God did not suffer Human Learning, or the Civil Power to come in to the Support of Christianity; the one, till above a hundred, the other, till three hundred Years after our Saviour. And,

1. We may satisfy ourselves, why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the utter Extermination of the *Jewish State*, was delay'd till forty Years after the Death of *Christ*.

One would think, that the *Jews* had completely fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities, when they spilt the Blood of *Christ*, and made themselves in the most solemn manner answerable for the Guilt of it; and that they were even then grown ripe for Divine Vengeance. But our

our Saviour having Pray'd on the Cross s E R M.
for his Murtherers, the Merit of that Blood which they spilt, prevail'd with God to respite their Punishment for some time, and to leave them still farther Room for Repentance. The Apostles, therefore, by an express Order of our Lord, as an Antient Tradition informs us, tarried in *Judua*, and the neighbouring Countries, *Twelve Years* after his Ascent ; Preaching the *Gospel of Reconciliation* to the *Jews*, and exhorting them to *Repent, and be Baptized, every one of them, in the Name of Jesus, for the Remission of their Sins* : Particularly of that great Sin they had committed in *Crucifying the Lord of Life* ; which is mention'd, not only in the *First*, but in all the several Sermons Preach'd to them by St. Peter, St. Stephen, and St. Paul, whereof an Account is preserv'd to us in the *Acts of the Apostles*. These Applications proving fruitless, and the *Twelve Years expiring*, God commanded the Disciples to execute their Commission in its utmost Extent, and to go *Teach and Baptize all Nations*, that the

S E R M. Faith of the Gentiles might be a Reproach,

IV. to the Jewish Infidelity. And so indeed
 it was.

For nothing could better illustrate the Infinite Goodness of God, and the incorrigible Perverseness of that People; than to observe, that the rest of the World flock'd in to the Obedience of Christ, as soon as the Apostles erected the Standard of the Cross, while the Jews still stood out Obstinate and Impenitent: The Rest of the World, I say, who had neither so immediate an Interest in the Messiah as They, nor were so capable of discerning his Character, and the Time of his Coming; nor had any Share in the Guilt of spilling his Blood, which might excite them the more eagerly to lay hold of the Gospel-Pardon. Within less than Thirty Years, after the Apostles set out from Jewry, they made Proselytes

Rom. x.
18 every where; Their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World. And now, therefore, God's Mercy to the Seed of Abraham, being manifested in the most conspicuous manner, and their Infidelity being heightned by all

All possible Circumstances of Aggravati- s E R M.
 & He inflicted the Sentence of Excision,
 which he had before pronounc'd; but
 which could not be executed, till the
 Church of the *Gentiles*, which was to
 succeed that of the *Jews*, had taken suf-
 ficient Root in the World. *Haste thee,* Geo xix.
 (said the destroying Angel to *Lot*) *escape*
to Zoar, for I cannot do any thing [i. e.
 cannot execute my Commission against
Sodom] *till thou be come thither.* And, in
 like manner, may the Spirit seem to have
 quickened the Industry of the *Apostles*, by
 saying, " Haste Ye, spread the Doctrine
 " of *Christ* every where; for, till that be
 " done, I cannot pour out my Fury on
 " *Jerusalem.*" Thus had our Lord him-
 self, a little before his Passion, declar'd,
This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Matt.
Preached in all the World, for a Wit-
ness unto all Nations; and then shall
the End come; that is, the *End of the*
Jewish Polity, and of the whole Mosaic
Dispensation. A

2d Thing, we may learn from the
 swift manner in which the Gospel was
 pro-

S E R M. propagated, is, to give ourselves frō.
 IV. thence an Account, why Miracles ceas'd
 ~~~~~ so soon in the Christian Church, when  
 they were continu'd so long in that of  
 the *Jews*, even as long at least as their  
 first Temple stood.

The great Use of Miracles was, to confirm the Truth, and promote the Reception of the Gospel, at its first setting out. That Use ceasing, Miracles likewise ceas'd; being gradually, and, in about an Age after the Ascent of *Christ*, almost totally withdrawn. For what St. Paul, says expressly of *Tongues*, holds equally true of all other Supernatural Gifts and Powers, indulg'd to the first Promulgators of Christianity; they were *Signs to those who believed not, not to those who believed.*

Indeed, since the *Jewish Dispensation* had receiv'd its Authority entirely from Miracles, it could not, without more and greater Miracles, be abolish'd. Since the Kingdom of Satan, and the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathen Gods, had been erected upon *false and lying Wonders,*

*true*

rue ones were necessary to overthrow it. S E R M. But, as soon as the Cross of *Christ* had IV. Every where triumph'd in some Measure  over *Judaism* and *Paganism*; there was no need of a continu'd Series of Miracles, to complete the Conquest, or to confirm the Faith of those who embrac'd Christianity. The manifest Reasonableness and Excellence of its Precepts, were of themselves sufficient to make it flourish still more and more, and baffle all remaining Opposition. Especially, since those, who were to live at the greatest Distance from the Miracles done in the Infancy of the Gospel, might be as clearly satisfy'd of the Truth of them, as if they themselves had actually seen them; partly, from the Evangelic Writings receiv'd early in all Christian Churches; and, partly, from the Reason and Nature of the Thing itself; it being (as I have already shewn) altoge-  
ther impossible, that, without Miracles, such a Degree of Success should have attended the first Preachers of the Gospel.

But now, as to the Law of *Moses*, the Case was quite otherwise: For, though  
it

S E R M. it was usher'd in by Miracles, yet those

iv. Miracles being perform'd in the Desert,  
without any Witnesses but what were of  
that Nation; and before a Race of Men,  
that were extinct, ere the *Jewish* Worship  
was erected in *Canaan*; and the Account  
of those Miracles being contain'd in a  
Book, which was all along kept secret from  
the rest of the World; Infidelity found  
some Room, or Colour to suspect the  
Truth of them: Nor could it necessarily  
be inferr'd from that Degree of Success  
which the *Jewish* Religion met with,  
that it *must* have sprang originally from  
Miracles. The Whole of that Religion  
consisted in Ceremonious *Rites* and *Obser-*  
*vances*, which had no Intrinsic Good-  
ness in them, nor any clear Marks or  
Characters upon them of that Divine  
Authority by which they were com-  
manded. Their *Typical* Use and Refe-  
rence was little known to the *Jews* them-  
selves, and could be less discern'd by those  
who were *Strangers to the Covenant of*  
*Promises*. In a Word, the Law of *Moses*,  
as distinguished from all other Religious  
Institu-

Institutions, had nothing in the Frame S E R M.  
and Design of it, apt either to recommend  
it to its Professors, or to invite Proselytes.  
During such a Ceremonious State, it  
might be requisite for God, by frequent  
Manifestations of his Divine Power and  
Presence, to keep that backsliding Peo-  
ple within the Bounds of their Duty, and  
procure Reverence to the Worship which  
he had set up, from the Idolatrous Na-  
tions around them : It might be requisite,  
I say, that he should, at fit Intervals,  
own himself to be the Author of their  
Religion, and do New Miracles, to  
keep up the Credit and Influence of the  
Old Ones. Miracles, therefore, conti-  
nu'd in that Church for many Ages after  
its first Erection : For, besides those  
which their several Prophets occasionally  
wrought, the immediate Appearance of  
God in the *Sbecbinab*, or Cloud of  
Glory, and his Answers by *Urim* and  
*Tummim*, were familiar, while the Ta-  
bernacle, and first Temple lasted ; and  
even many of their *Laws*, (for Instance,  
the *Law of Jealousy*, those for the At-

SE R M. tendance of the Jews at their *Three Great Festivals*, and for their Resting in the *Sabbatic Year*) were so contriv'd, as to be Demonstrative Proofs of the Immediate Interposition of God in the Affairs of that People. With good Reason, therefore, was a long Succession of Miracles indulg'd under that Dispensation: Not so, under the Gospel; which, after it was sufficiently established, needed not New Signs and Wonders, to preserve, or promote the Belief of it; its Original Success being, as it were, a perpetual Standing Miracle, of sufficient Force to evince its Divine Extraction, from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of it. A

*3d Use*, which, I thought, might be made of the Miraculous Manner of Propagating the Gospel, was, to give ourselves from thence an Account, Why God did not suffer *Human Learning*, or the *Civil Power* to come in to the Support of it; the one, till at least an Hundred, the other, till three Hundred Years after our Saviour. The Design of this

Part

Part of the Divine Conduct seems to have s E R M.  
been, that the Establishment of our Faith iv.  
might appear manifestly to be the Immediate Work of Heaven, and not owing to human Means, or any Set of Natural Causes. The Apostles themselves confess (and glory in confessing) that, as they Preach'd the Doctrine of *Christ* in the most simple, artless manner; not with *Excellency of Speech*, or the *Enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*; so the first Converts, whom their Labours brought over to the Faith, were generally mean Persons of no acquir'd Knowledge, no Rank, no Education. For, *Not many Wise* <sup>1 Cor. i.</sup>  
*Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty,* <sup>26, 27, 28.</sup>  
*not many Noble were called; but God chose the Foolish things of the World, to confound the Wise; and the Weak things of the World, to confound the things which were Mighty; and the Base things of the World, and the things which were despised did he choose; yea, and the things which were not, (such is the Less'ning Phrase of St. Paul) to bring to nought the things which were.* The Reason of  
L 2 which

S E R M. which *Choice* is plainly set down in the  
I V. following Words: *That no Flesh might*  
*glory in his Presence*: He would have  
no Rivals, no Sharers in the Glory of  
this Event; and, therefore, produc'd it  
in such a manner, and by such unpropor-  
tion'd Means, as to make it impossible  
for considering Men to mistake the true  
Author; so, as that all, who look'd on,  
R E U X 27. should be ready to cry out, *This is thy*  
*Hand, and thou, Lord, best done it.*

Indeed it was, on more Accounts than one, requisite, that human Learning should not be admitted into the Christian Church, till it was sufficiently spread and settled. For, tho' the Use of Learning might from the Beginning, have been great, in order to confound the vain Sophistry, and wild Superstition of the Greeks, and to vindicate the Doctrine of *Christ* against all their Objections: yet great Inconveniences might also have redounded to the Faith by the Means of it. For it must be confess'd, that, when Philosophers in After-times embrac'd our Religion, they blended it often with the peculiar Notions of those Sects

Sects in which they had been educated, S E R M.  
and by that means corrupted the Pu- IV.  
rity and Simplicity of the Christian Doc- ~~~~~  
trine. Had this happened from the Be-  
ginning, such an Early Mixture of Phi-  
losophy with Christianity would have bid  
fair for an Universal Reception in suc-  
ceeding Ages. But the Gospel being first,  
for an Age and more, purely and simply  
profess'd, there was no great Danger of  
its suffering from the Subtleties and Re-  
finements of Philosophy afterwards; be-  
cause every Christian was then able to  
compare them with, and try them by,  
the plain Primitive Rule of Faith, re-  
ceiv'd till that Time in all Churches; and  
might securely reject, or admit them, up-  
on such a Comparison.

For these Reasons, the Learned and  
Wise of this World seem to have been  
overlook'd by God in the first Plantation  
of the Gospel; that neither its Success  
might be imputed to their Skill and  
Assistance, nor its Doctrine run the  
Risque of being blended early with their  
particular Opinions. However, still we

SEB M. may observe, that the Admission of  
IV. *Learning* was long before the Admission  
of the *Civil Power*; because the former,  
having less Force and Influence than the  
latter towards procuring the Establish-  
ment of the Gospel, was, consequently,  
less liable to be suspected as the Cause of  
it. Let me add also, that, as the Powers  
of this World would have been mightier  
Instruments of advancing Christianity,  
than human Learning could be, so would  
they have been more able, and more like-  
ly to corrupt it, and enervate the Force  
of it; as we find, that, not long after  
their coming into the Christian Church,  
they actually did: And therefore, on this  
Account likewise was their Admission  
longer postpon'd. For near three hun-  
dred Years after Christ, no *Roman Em-*  
*peror* embraced the Faith; tho' they were  
(several of them) Men of great Moral  
Virtues, and *not far from the Kingdom*  
*of God*, as to their Personal Qualifica-  
tions and Characters. Such, particular-  
ly, were *Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Adri-*  
*an, and the two Antonines.* Yet it  
pleas'd

pleas'd the Divine Providence, that even ~~S E R M.~~ these good Emperors, instead of embracing, and protecting the Christian Faith, should discourage and persecute it ; that so the *Kingdom of Christ*, which was *not of this World*, might not be beholden to any of the Kingdoms of this World for its Establishment ; but spread and fix itself every where, not only without the Aid of Princes, but against their Will ; in spite of their fiercest Opposition, nay, even by the *Means* of it. *The Kings of the Earth*, Pf. ii. 2, and the Rulers took Counsel together a- 4, 6, 8. gainst the Lord, and against his Anointed. He that sat in the Heavens laughed them to scorn, the Lord had them in Derision. He set his King upon his holy Hill of Sion, first ; and then, gave him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession. Herod, and Pontius Pilate began this Opposition (for thus hath St. Peter expressly apply'd the Prophecy) and the Roman Emperors, till Constantine, continu'd it. Nevertheless, the Word of God went on, conquer-ing to conquer ; till it had subdu'd even

IV.



SE R M. these Subduers of the World to the Ob-  
dience of the Faith, and brought them to  
<sup>1</sup> Rev. iv.  
<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. i.  
<sup>25.</sup> *cast their Crowns before the Throne of the*  
Lamb, and to acknowledge, that *The*  
*Foolishness of God is wiser than Men, and*  
*the Weakness of God is stronger than Men,*  
even than the strongest and the highest  
among the Sons of Men. There was then  
a Christian Church, long before there were  
any Christian Princes ; She did not grow  
up under Their Shadow, but receiv'd them  
into Her Bosom : And, as she subsisted for  
several Centuries, ere the Civil Power  
came in to her, so will she endure for end-  
less Ages, when the Civil Power shall be  
no more ; and even now, when she receives  
Protection and Encouragement from it,  
yet is She in all the chief Functions and  
Operations of the Ministers of her Spi-  
ritual Kingdom, independent upon it. Thus  
did God order things, on purpose, that  
the Distinction of these several Societies,  
Offices, and Powers might be evident ;  
and perpetually without Encroachment  
or Confusion, preserv'd : And, *let no*  
*Man join together what God hath thus*  
*put*

*put asunder!* It remains that I should, S E R M.  
under my

IV.



Fifth and last General Head, briefly inquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make suitable Reflections upon it, with regard both to those who liv'd then, when this Check was given to the Gospel, and to Us, who live now in the Latter Ages of the World.

V.

The plain Answer to the Enquiry propos'd, is, That the Miracle ceas'd, when the Civil Power began to declare openly in Behalf of Christianity; that is, soon after *Constantine* came to the Throne. For it was no longer a Wonder, that our Religion should thrive and flourish, when, instead of bitter Persecutions, it met with all manner of Encouragements. For a Century after *Constantine*, and upwards, the Number of Christians multiplied exceedingly in all the Parts of the World in which it had already been planted, and to which the Empire of the *Romans*, or their Influence, did extend. For

above

S E R M. above a Century after that, Christianity  
IV. seems to have been at a stand ; neither  
gaining much Ground, nor losing much, unless only in the Lives of its lukewarm Professors. But then it declin'd apace every Day ; Dissentions among Christians grew hot, and their Zeal for Religion waxed cold. The great Honours and Endowments, which Religious Princes had bestow'd on the Church, did too often occasion Ambition and Luxury in those who contended for them, or possess'd them. In a Word, all the Vices of Prosperity abounded, together with the Advantages of it ; So that the Name of Christianity was no longer Venerable in the Eyes of Men ; and its holy Doctrine, not producing an answerable Sanctity of Life, made no farther Impressions upon them. This unhappy Opportunity *Mabomet* laid hold of, to set up his Religion ; which being (as I have said) suited to the Voluptuous Manners of the East, and seconded by the Power of the Sword, made large Inroads into Christendom, and tore away entire Provinces at once from

from the Profession of the Gospel. Since ~~S E R M.~~ <sup>I V.</sup>  
that time, Christianity seems to have ~~P F. b o o k .~~  
been almost in a continual Decay : *The Hedges of this Vineyard of God being bro-* <sup>12, 13.</sup>  
*ken down, all they that went by, plucked off her Grapes : the Wild-Boar of the Wood did root it up, and the wild Beast out of the Field did devour it ; till a Discovery of some unknown Parts of the World opened a new Way for enlarging the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom. The Zeal of some Devout Men (tho' mixed often with Private Interests and Designs) stirr'd them up to make use of this Advantage, and to Publish the Gospel of Christ in the remotest Corners of the East, whither, it is probable, none of the Apostles ever came. There also Christianity (a corrupt and superstitious Christianity) hath gotten footing. How long it may continue, and how far it may advance, is known to Him alone, who hath deter-* <sup>A C T S x v i i .</sup>  
*mined the Times before appointed, to Reli-* <sup>26.</sup>  
*gions as well as Nations, and the Bounds of their Habitation. I shall not presume to enquire into it; but shall raise*  
an

S E R M. an Useful Reflection or two from what  
 iv. hath been observ'd on this Head, and  
 ~~~~~ with a short Application of it to our  
 Selves, shall conclude this Discourse.

The Imperfect Propagation of the Gospel, and the Prevalence of *Mahometism* * over it, are some of the darkest Secrets of Divine Providence. But the Causes that contributed to produce this great Revolution are manifest : they were plainly the Vices and Discords of the Christians of those Times, that gave the Enemies of our Faith Courage to attack it, put Weapons into their Hands, and furnished them with all manner of Advantages

* Nulli unquam genti tam latè regnatum fuit, neque tam brevi temporis spatio unquam tot regiones, tot regna sub jugum missa. Incredibile dictu, verissimum tamen est, octoginta aut non multo plurium annorum spatio, subjugarunt illi & Diabolico *Muhammedis* Imperio acquisiverunt Palæstinam, Syriam, Armeniam utramque, totam fermè Asiam minorem, Persiam, Indiam, Egyp-tum, Numidiam, Barbariam totam ad Nigrum usque fluvium, Lusitaniam, Hispaniam. Neque hic stetit illo-rum fortuna aut ambitio, donec & Italie magnam quo-que partem adjecerint, ad portas usque urbis Romæ ; quietiam Siciliam, Candiam, Cyprum, & reliquas maris Mediterranei insulas. *Moder Comm. Apoc. Lib. 3. Tuba 5.*
p. 468.

against it. *Christ* came into the World S E R M.
on purpose to subdue the Power, and I V.
destroy the Kingdom of *Satan*. He 
display'd the Banner of his Cross, and
summon'd all Nations to repair to it ;
who accordingly obey'd the Signal. But
while the Extremest Parts of the Earth
were meditating a Submission, while his
greatest Enemies were hastening to put
their Necks under his Feet, a Stop was
put to their Intentions, and his Tri-
umphs, by the Mutinies and Desertions
of his own Soldiers. Who can suffi-
ciently deplore the Guilt, and detest the Ill
Influence of those Vices, which cut off
so many Kingdoms at once from the
Empire of *Christ*? not only arrested his
Doctrine in its full Course, and said to it,
Hither shalt thou come, and no farther ;
but made the Sun of Righteousness go
backward, as it were, *ten Degrees*, and
leave many Countries under gross Dark-
ness, which had once been enlighten'd
with the saving Truths of the Gospel?
Certainly, Spiritual Faction and Pride,
and Uncharitable Breaches of Christian
Unity

S E R M. Unity and Peace, are not such slight

iv. Offences as some Men are willing to
 think them; since it was owing in great
 measure to These, that the Universal
 Reign of *Christ* upon Earth was then
 hinder'd, and the Accomplishment of the
 Prophecies in that respect deferred to dis-
 tant Ages.

Many Princes since, indiscreetly Pious,
 have made Attempts to regain the Ground,
 Christianity lost, by the Force of their
 Arms, and to plant the Faith anew in
 those Places, where it once had Possession,
 by the Points of their Swords. But (alas!)
 that great Work is to be accomplish'd, not
 by such *Holy Wars* as these; but by Con-
 flicts of another kind, which we must
 maintain with our own Corrupt Habits,
 and Vicious Inclinations; not by Foreign
 Acquisitions, but Domestick Victories o-
 ver those Impieties of Christians, which
 gave the great Eneiny of our Faith his
 first Advantages against it: For tho' the

Math. xi. *Kingdom of Heaven suffer Violence, and*

^{12.} *the violent take it by force; yet the Wea-*

4. pons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but

Spiritual.

Spirſtual. When the Converſions of S E R M. those that name the Name of *Chrift*, become agreeable to the Purity of his Doc- trine ; when the Diviſions of *Chrifṭendom* are heal'd, and the Profeffors of our Holy Faith live together every where like Men of one Mind, in one House ; then ſhall the Sceptre of *Chrift's* Kingdom extend itſelf to all the unconverted Parts of the Earth, and not fooner.

That God, ere the Day of Final Doom, will bring this about, the Scripture ſeems to ſay : but of the particular Time, at which he will effect it, we know no more, than of That, in which he will come to Judgment. However, let us All, as far as lies in our Power, coaſtribute to this Great Event, and prepare the way for it. None of Us, I think, are now oblig'd to enter upon the *Miſſion*, and ſacrifice our Lives, in order to spread the Gospel among *Mahometans* and *Heathens* : I ſay, None of us, I think, are now *oblig'd* to it, as not being arm'd with the Power of *Mi- raties*, requisite for ſuch an Attempt. However, without hazarding our Lives, much

S E R M. much may be done by us, both at Home
IV. and Abroad, towards encouraging and
~~~~~ promoting so good a Work. And let us  
not blame, much less deride those Good  
Men (though of another Communion)  
whose honest Zeal hath carried them yet  
farther. Let us rather mention with Ho-  
nour the Names of as many of them, as  
we can reasonably suppose to have been  
led into this Design by sincere Motives  
of advancing the Glory of God, and the  
Salvation of Souls, without aiming at  
By-Ends, or any Temporal Advantages ;  
and let us wish, that the Reformation  
had not undergone just Reproaches for  
its Backwardness to promote so glorious  
an Enterprise : an Omission, not easily  
to be excused in such Protestant Nations,  
as have greatly enlarr'd their Traffick  
and Wealth, by the Productions of those  
Countries, wherein many poor Ignorant  
Savages dwell, who want only to be  
instructed in the saving Knowledge of  
*Christ*, in order to embrace it. But, *how*  
*shall they believe in Him, of whom they*  
*have not heard? and how shall they bear,*  
with-

without a Preacher? It might justly be s E R M. expected, that Those, who had been partakers of the Carnal things of these Gen-<sup>IV.</sup>  
<sup>'Rom. xii.</sup> tiles, should have ministered unto them<sup>14.</sup>

in Spiritual things; that, after enriching themselves by the Spoils of those Provinces (which I know not what Right they had to invade, and conquer) they should at least have made them that charitable Return of planting the Gospel among them; a Work, of greater Importance, and Service to the Publick than all their other *Plantations*.

But this is a Reflection, in which, perhaps few, if any, that hear me, are concern'd. To conclude, therefore, Let every One of us, in our several Places and Stations, do our best to promote the Kingdom of *Christ* within us, by promoting the Love and Practice of Evangelical Purity and Holiness; and let us likewise frequently put up our most ardent Requests for the Enlargement of his Visible Administration without us; *beseeching* God, in the Words of our Church, that he would *please, of his Gracious*

SER M. Goodness, shortly to accomplish the Number  
IV. of his Elect, and to hasten the Kingdom of  
~~~~~ his Dear Son.

*To Him, with the Father and the Holy
Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Do-
minion, and Might, now and for ever !*
Amen.

A Scowler Incapable of True Wisdom.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

A T

WHITE-HALL,

October 28, 1694.

Prov. xiv. 6.

A Scorer seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.

IT is the Wisest among the Children S E R M.
of Men, who speaks; and about That, v.
which most nearly concerns Us; and He best
understood, even the Method of at-
taining True Wisdom: It becomes us,

SERM. therefore, to give the most fix'd and serious Attention, we can, to what he is saying.

A Scowler, saith he, seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not. Where we are, first, to enquire, Who it is, that is represented to us, under the Character of a Scowler; and, then, in what Sense he is said to seek Wisdom, but not to find it.

The *Scowler* is One, who is frequently mention'd in this Book of *Proverbs*; and against whom the Author of it hath levell'd no small Number of his Apophthegms, and wise Sayings. We find in the *Psalms* and *Propheetick* Writings also, many Glances at him, many Complaints of him; so that the Nation of the *Jews* did, it seems, abound mightily with this Sort of Men; and they were a Great and Particular Grievance to the Followers of True Piety and Wisdom.

Their Character seems, in short, to have been This. They were Men, that, with much ado, had made a shift to get rid of Good Principles, and such stiff Opinions, as they found inconsistent with

a Loose

a Loose Practicc. As they had not any S E R M. Religion themselves, so their Way was v. to despise Those who had ; to look down with Pity and Conteⁿtempt upon a poor deluded Under-World ; beasts of Burthen that followed in a Track, after their Leaders ; Slaves to receiv'd Rules, and Precarious Opinions, to Foolish Empty Forms and Observances ; but who never once reason'd freely, or thought for Themselves. They were unfortunately fallen into a Time, when frequent Commotions happen'd in the Jewish State (as the Case remarkably was, in the Age before Solomon came to the Throne) and had seen several Sorts of Men uppermost, and, consequently, several Notions of things prevailing by Turns. This contributed mightily to unsettle their Thoughts, or (as they call'd it doubtles^s) to enlarge them ; to create in them a slight Opinion of the Eternal Differences of Right and Wrong, Good and Evil ; and to make them laugh at Those, who were Eager on any Side, or for any Cause whatsoever, which they did not get by.

S E R M. They evidently saw that Some, who
v. sat up for greater Purity, and a Demurer
~~~~ Shew and Face of Religion than their  
Neighbours, were really Counterfeits, and  
meant nothing, at the bottom, but Their  
own Interest. And they wisely resolv'd,  
upon this, that all Religion was, like  
Theirs, a Convenient Trick and Pre-  
tence only; invented by cunning Men  
to keep silly People in awe, to make  
Princes Reign safely, and the Priesthood  
Live easily. But as for Them, they  
knew better things than to fall in with  
the Herd, and to give themselves up to  
be ridden by the Tribe of *Levi*; the  
Poorest and most Contemptible Tribe of  
the Twelve, which had no Lot, no In-  
heritance among their Brethren; but liv'd  
upon the Cheat of Sacrifices and Offer-  
ings, and upon driving a Gainful Traffick  
for the Good Things of This World,  
here paid down to them, by promising  
and preaching up to Those they dealt  
with, a Recompence in a World to  
come.

Nor were these Men content to enjoy this Secret, which they had thus found out, quietly among themselves ; but set up openly for Profelytes, and a Party ; for running down all Religion, and for laughing Piety and Virtue out of Countenance : So that a Good and Honest Man was sure to be their Mark, wheresoever they found him ; and they were ever shooting their *Arrows* against him, Ps. lxiv. even *Bitter Words*. And this was come <sup>3.</sup> to that pass, that the True Servants of God did almost sink under the Affliction ; and did make it matter of Publick Request to God in the Solemn Service of the Church, to be freed from it : —— *Have* Ps. cxiii. *mercy upon us, O Lord,* said They, *have* <sup>3. 4.</sup> *mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly fill'd with Contempt.* Our Soul is exceedingly fill'd with the Scorning of Those that are at Ease, and with the Contempt of the Proud.

This is, in some measure, the Character of that Man, who, in the Language of the Text, is call'd *A Scorer* ; and You see now, in what Sense he is said to seek

S E R M. *Wisdom*, but *not to find it*. For the meaning of these Expressions is plainly this ;  
That he pretends to know more, and to see farther, than the rest of Mankind ; to have made freer Enquiries after Truth, and to have shaken off the Prejudices of Education more thoroughly : He sets up for examining things to the bottom, without taking them upon Trust, or relying on the Authority of any Man. What God is pretended to have said in the Holy Writings, what Wise and Good Men have said in all Ages, and Countries of the World, he is not much concern'd to know. To the *Oracles of Right Reason he goes*, (by Right Reason always meaning his Own) and from thence he enquires what he is to think, and to do ; raises some fanciful Scheme of things to himself, frames some particular Set of Opinions ; and then rejoices in the mighty Discovery he hath made, and wonders at the rest of the World, that they do not fall in with it, and adore it. Now these Pretences, the Wise-man tells us, are vain, and these Searches are vain ; he

he hath taken a great deal of pains, only ~~S E R M.~~<sup>v.</sup> to be out of the way, and to miss the mark which he aims at: *A Scorer seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*

Having thus largely open'd the Sense of the Text, I shall endeavour, in what follows, to justify the Truth of the Observation contain'd in it, by shewing you, how it comes to pass, that the Men, who thus set up for a more than ordinary pitch of Wisdom and Sense, by Contemning Religion, and Deriding the Professors of it, do always, and must always, fail of the End which they propose to themselves; since, whatever Abilities they may have in Other matters, yet they are the most unqualified and incapable, of all Men, to make impartial Enquiries after Divine Truth, and to discern between That and Error.

There are *Four* things, which particularly unfit a Man for such a Task, a very *Proud*, or a very *Suspicious* Temper; *False Wit*, or *Sensuality*. And These are the Chief and Prevailing Ingredients in the Composition of that Man, whom we call a *Scorer*. The Two last do generally,

S E R M. nerally, and in most instances, belong to  
 v. him: But the Two First are Essential to  
 ~~~~~ him, and inseparable from him.

Pride is that Ruling Quality which, of all others, seems to take the fastest Hold ^{Prov. xxii.} of him; *Proud and Haughty Scowler* is ^{24.} his *Name*, says *Solomon*, elsewhere. And again, *There is a Generation, O how lofty are their Eyes! and their Eyelids lifted up!* The truth is, there never was, nor ever can be a settled Contempt of Religious Principles, that is not built upon *Pride*, i.e. upon an undue Value, which a Man hath for himself, and for his own Opinion, and a Disregard for every thing besides: And, therefore, the Author of (that Fantastical Book) the *Leviathan*, doth, at the very Entrance of it, very honestly, and in Terms confess, that he is a Man who *Loves his own Opinions*. And so, doubtless, doth every Man too, who treads in His Steps, tho' he doth not own it so frankly, or perhaps know it so thoroughly. Indeed a Modest Humble Man can hardly bring himself once to think of shaking off common

mon received Principles, and going a-s^t R M.
gainst the United Wisdom of Mankind: v.
or, if he should entertain, yet will he 
never venture to publish that Thought;
but will conceal it, as carefully as he
would his own Bosom Infirmity, or the
Secret of his Friend. 'Tis the presumptuous and proud Man alone, who dares
to trample on those Truths, which the
rest of the World reverence; and can sit
down quietly in the Assurance, that He
alone is in the Right, and all Mankind
beside in the Wrong.

Now, I say, as there is no one Quality,
that sticks more closely to a Scornful than that of Pride, so is there none that
doth more evidently obstruct right Reasoning, and an impartial Search after
Truths of all kinds, especially those which
relate to Virtue and Piety. And no
wonder therefore, if on this Account the
Scornful, tho' he *seek Wisdom*, yet *findeth it not*. *Pride* makes a Man seem sufficient
in his own Eyes, for all manner of Speculations and Enquiries; and, therefore, puts him indifferently upon the Pursuit

serm. suit of all Knowledge, and the Determination of all Doubts, without giving him
v. ~~~ Leave to distrust himself in the least, or once to consider, which way his Genius and Abilities lie. Hence it happens, that the Man, not being duly qualified for every Search, or, if he were, yet not having Leisure and Opportunity enough to go through with it, is fain to take up with slight and superficial Accounts of things; and then, what he wants in true Knowledge, to make up in downright Assurance. As soon as he hath touch'd on any Science, or Study, he immediately seems to himself to have master'd it; is as positive in his Opinions, and as hardy in his Assertions, as if the Thoughts of his whole Life had been directed that way only: Which is, as if a Coaster, who had gone from Port to Port only, should pretend to give a better Description of the Inland Parts of a Country, than those who have travell'd it all over. But this, I say, is the mischievous Nature of Pride; it makes a Man grasp at every thing, and, by Consequence,

sequence, comprehend nothing effectually & E R M.
and throughly ; and yet (which is worst
of all) inclines him to despise and con-
tradic^{v.}t those that do. It gives him just
enough Understanding, to raise an Ob-
jection or a Doubt ; but not enough to
lay it : Which, as it is the meanest and
most despicable, so it is also the most
dangerous State of Mind a Man can be
in ; and by so much the more dangerous,
as the Subject, upon which his Enquiries
turn, is more important, and the Errors
more fatal which he runs into, for want
of a due Knowledge of it. He that is
but half a Philosopher, is in danger of
being an Atheist ; an Half-Physician is
apt to turn Empiric ; an Half-bred Man
is conceited in his Address, and trouble-
some in his Conversation. Thus it is in
all Matters of Speculation, or Practice ;
He that knows but a little of them, and
is very confident of his own Strength,
is more out of the way of true Know-
ledge, than if he knew nothing at all.
Now there is, I say, a natural Tendency
in Pride, towards putting a Man's Mind
into

bring into such a Situation as this ; and, therefore, it must needs be a Quality very opposite to the Search and Attainment of true Wisdom.

And then, supposing a proud Man to be once in the Wrong, it is scarce possible that he should ever be set right again ; he is plac'd above the reach of that great Means of Amendment, Reproof ; *A*

Prov. xiii. 1. *Scowler beareth not rebuke,* says Solomon : And, therefore, as his Pride led him into a Mistake at first, so will it be sure to keep him there ; and to harden him in his way, against whatever wise Men can think, or say of him.

Thus, I say, is Pride an Enemy to the Knowledge of Truth in general ; but most of all doth it hinder Men from discerning Sacred Truth, and the Doctrines of Reveal'd Religion. A proud Man is very hardly brought to digest the humble Duties of the Cross, or to admit a Belief of the Mysteries of Christianity : The one are too low for him, and he cannot stoop to the Practice of them ; the other are too high for his Understanding, and he

he desires to be excus'd from entertain- S E R M.
ing any Proposition as true, which he
doth not perfectly comprehend. If he
cannot give himself a certain plain Ac-
count, in what Manner, and to what
End God did a thing ; he wisely resolves,
that therefore he did it not at all. If he
hath not as clear an Idea of every Term
in an Article of Faith, as he hath of those
in a Mathematical Proposition ; 'tis pre-
sently unphilosophical, absurd, and foolish;
invented by those, whose Interest it is
to puzzle Mens Understandings, that they
may have their Wills and Affections at
their Service.

And this puts us in mind also of that II.
Second great Ingredient in the Character
of a Scowler, which we propos'd to con-
sider ; a strange and unreasonable De-
gree of *Suspicion*, by which he doubts of
every thing he hears, and distrusts every
Man he converses with ; imagines the
World to be all Cheat and Imposture ;
that there is no Sincerity, no Honesty
any where ; but that every Man is con-
tinually

S E R M. tinually studying how to put a Trick upon his Neighbour. Without this Temper (it might be easily prov'd, that) a Man cannot bring himself to run down Religion, and the Professors of it; and, with it, it is impossible, I think, to arrive at true Wisdom. Indeed, to be cautious, and upon our Guard, in receiving Doctrines, and not easily to give up our Assent to every Tale that is told us, is a Point of great Prudence, and very requisite, in such a Multiplicity of Opinions as there is in the World, to preserve us from Error. But then, we may carry this Point too far; we may be so scrupulous and circumspect in admitting the Testimonies of Men, as to reject some good Witnesses among several bad ones; and to deceive ourselves oftentimes, for very fear of being deceiv'd by others. A general undisengaging Suspicion is altogether as apt to mislead a Man, as a too easy and unwary Credulity. And to this Excess a Scowler is naturally inclin'd: He is so possess'd with the Notion of *Priestcraft*, and *Pious Frauds*, as to apply

apply it indifferently to all Religions, and s E R M. to every thing in Religion : He is so afraid of having his Understanding im- pos'd upon, in Matters of Faith, that he stands equally aloof from all Propositions of that Kind, whether true or false : Which is, as if a Man should refuse to receive any Mony at all, because there is a great deal goes about that is false and counterfeit ; or resolve not to make a Friendship or Acquaintance with any Man, because many Men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great Instance of Folly ; and, in what Breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a Man extremely for the Study and Attainment of Religious Wisdom. An Extre- mity of Suspicion in an Enquirer after Truth, is like a raging Jealousy in an Husband, or a Friend ; it leads a Man to turn all his Thoughts towards the ill-na- tur'd Side, and to put the worst Con- struction upon every thing ; and (in Con- sequence of that) for once that he is real- ly in the Right, in his Guesses and Cen-

S E R M. sures, to be very often, and very much
v. in the Wrong.

III. A *Third* Part of the Character of that Man whom we are describing, is, *False Wit*; or a Way of exposing Things sacred and serious, by passing a bold Jeit upon them, and ridiculing Arguments, instead of confuting them. The very Name of *a Scowler* will tell us, that this is one of his most belov'd Accomplish-
ments: And, I am sure, it is such an one, as can never help a Man to pro-
cure right Impressions of Things, and will scarce ever allow him to improve or preserve them. Wit indeed, as it im-
plies a certain uncommon Reach and Vi-
vacity of Thought, is an excellent Ta-
lent; very fit to be employ'd in the Search of Truth, and very capable of assisting us to discern and embrace it: But in the Way in which the Scowler exerts it, the Way of Satire and prophane Drollery, it betrays a Man into a thousand Errors, for one that it discovers to him. Men of quick and lively Parts are apt to give

themselves a loose beyond plain Reason s E R M.
and common Sense, and to say many v.
things not exactly right and true, in or-
der to say somewhat new and surprizing.
Their great Aim is, in general, *to please* ;
and, in order to it, they must bend all
their Wit that way, to which the corrupt
Nature of Man is inclin'd, and be sure
always to speak *against* that which is up-
permost ; I mean the Opinions that are
most general and prevailing. This gives
them a light and trifling, instead of a se-
rious and manly Frame of Spirit ; and
makes them think, they have answer'd
all the wisest Reasons that can be brought
for any thing, if they have but clapp'd a
Nickname upon it, and dress'd up a grave
and venerable Truth in so odd a Disguise
as to raise Mirth and Laughter from it.
Thus a late Person, eminent for Wit and
Wickedness, till a Death-bed made him
more serious, and gave him truer Appre-
hensions of Things, us'd to please him-
self mightily with this Thought, that
the doing of a Miracle was only another
Phrase for the *shewing of a Trick* : And

S E R M. having once represented the Thing to
v. himself under such a light Image, he
could hardly be brought to think reverently ever afterwards; or to allow the strongest Arguments which could be brought for the Truth of Miracles, a due and impartial Consideration. And thus also the great Leader of the Libertines of this Age (whom we have already had Occasion to mention) made Sport with the Doctrine of the *Divinity* of Christ, by translating, after an absurd manner, the Greek Word Λόγος, (which St. John applies to him) and assuring us, that That Appellation given to our Saviour, was, in our Tongue, as much to say, the *Verb of God*. And this vain and blasphemous Criticism he thought sufficient to overthrow a prime Article of the Christian Faith. In the same manner he pretended to ridicule the Doctrine of Grace, by enquiring into the Meaning of two Words, generally used by Divines concerning it, to wit, *Infusion* and *Inpiration*; and by informing us, that they signified, in plain *English*, *Inpouring* and *Inblowing*.

Inblowing. I bring these Instances to s E R M.
shew, how far a Scorer may be led out v.
of the Way of Truth, by a little Knack of 
playing upon Things and Words, which
he miscalls *Wit*; and upon which he shall
value himself more, and be wiser in his
own Conceit than *seven Men that can
render a Reason.*

The *Fourth* and last Thing, from IV.
whence we propos'd to give an account of
his Deceptions, was *Sensuality*: and whe-
ther this too doth not, for the most Part,
accompany a Contempt of Religion, I
appeal to the Observation and Experience
of every one that hears me. Look round
the World, and you shall seldom find a
Man loose in his Principles, who is not
so likewise in Manners. There may pos-
sibly be, now and then in an Age, an
Instance of some cold Phlegmatick Man
that shall set up for overturning Religion
and Morality, merely for the Sake of
Contradiction, or to get himself a Name
by it, without the Design of indulging
his own Appetites in so doing: But this

S E R M. is a very rare Case ; generally the Scorners are, as St. Peter and St. Jude have in their several Epistles agreed to describe them, *Men, who walk after their own Lusts.* Accordingly, we may observe, that this scorning Humour hath been most prevalent in those Ages of the World, in which the Love of Pleasure, and the Arts of Ease and Luxury did most abound ; and is commonly incident to Men, at that Time of their Lives, when their Lusts are most ungoverned, and their Blood boils hottest. 'Tis chiefly the young robust Sinner that indulges himself in it, *whilst he is in the midst of his Enjoyments :* For though a Man may continue in the Practice of this impious Folly to the very End of his Life, yet the Habit itself is generally formed much earlier.

Now the Sensual Man is, of all Men living, the most improper for Enquiries after Truth, and the least at Leisure for it. He is never sedate and cool ; and therefore not able to fix his

his Attention to a Point, and go through s F R M. with it. He is never disinterested and impartial; and, therefore, not capable of deliberating freely. He is already under the Dominion and Power of his own Lusts; and perhaps likes to be so, and is very unwilling to shake off his Chains. Now such a Man, so qualified, is, no doubt, a very incompetent Judge of Divine Truth, and very unfit to consider the Pleas that are brought for it. His Search into these Things is like to be with no great Evenness and Fairness: How can it, when he comes with strong Wishes, that he may find it all a Mistake? Indeed, when a Man allows himself in all Sorts of Impurities, and is determined to go on in them; and yet finds himself under the troublesome Restraint of Principles, and the Dread of Religion, which hangs continually over him; the only way for him to pursue his Enjoyments, and yet be easy, is, to set his Face directly against the Doctrines of Religion, that give him any Check or Disturbance, and resolve to

S E R M. get rid of them as soon as he can. And
v. he may put the Thoughts, which arise in
~~~~ him upon this Occasion, together, and  
make a Book of them, if he pleases ;  
and then tell us, that this is a sober En-  
quiry after Truth, and a free Discussion  
of the Point in Debate ; but there is no-  
thing of that in it : He thinks of Truth,  
just as a Man doth of his Enemy, with  
Spite and Anger, and a Design only of  
finding out whatever may blast and ex-  
pose it. This is a strange contumelious  
way of treating Divine Things, and wou'd  
tempt even a good Man to return the Af-  
fronts done to Virtue and Piety, by open-  
ing the Characters of those who do them ;  
in which we should commonly find, that  
Sensuality and Looseness of Life had a  
very great and particular Share. But  
some Men, who write pretended *Histo-*  
*ries of Religion*, are beholden to the real  
Religion of others that their Histories are  
not written.

Thus have I run through those four  
several Properties, which remarkably be-  
long to the Character of *a Scorer* ; and  
shewn

shewn you, how each of them contributes to misinform and mislead him in his Pursuit of Wisdom ; so that, supposing him really and in good Earnest to seek it, yet, thus setting out, and thus qualified, it is not at all probable that he should find it.

And now the plain and obvious Use we are to make of this Discourse, is, to satisfy ourselves from hence, how it hath come to pass, that the true Religion, all along, in the several Ages of the World, hath not been entertain'd by many of the seemingly Wittiest and Wifest among the Children of Men. To this startling Question we can now give a short and easy Answer, from the Observation of the Text, *They were Scorners.* They were either *Proud* and *Opinionative* Men, that could not endure to learn plain humble Lessons of Piety and Goodness, especially from such as they had no Esteem of, no Value for : Or their Minds were tainted with an ill-natured and unreasonable *Suspicion*, which, from finding out

S E R M. out some Cheats in Religion, led them

v. to pronounce all Religion a Cheat.

They had a Talent perhaps, at *ridiculing* honest Rules and Maxims, and making Sport with Things sacred and serious; and, therefore, to have own'd any fix'd Scheme of Religious Principles, would have been a mighty Damp to their Imaginations, and have taken away from them the Subject of above half their Wit and Pleasantness. Or, lastly, They were Men of *sensual* and *impure Lives*, who were resolv'd to make their Opinions and their Pleasures as consistent as they could; and who therefore, were oblig'd, in point of Interest, to disbelieve every thing that made against them.

This is the short and true Account of the Matter; and will appear to be so, if we cast our Eyes backward on the Story of the World, and consider, who they have been, that have rejected the true Religion, all along from the Creation down to this Time.

In the Old World, *Noah*, who was s E R M.  
the only Man that preserv'd the Wor- v.  
ship of the True God in his Family,  
seems to have been an honest plain-  
hearted Man; *just and perfect in his Gen. vi 9.*  
*Generation, (as he is describ'd in Scrip-*  
*ture) and walking with God.* The rest  
of the World are said to have eatn and  
drunken, to have married and been  
given in Marriage, *i. e.* they were Men  
who liv'd in all the Enjoyments of Sense,  
who revell'd, and took their Fill of all  
the Good Things of this World; and,  
to be sure, were very merry, and very  
bitter upon those that did not. How  
did they deride that Grave Preacher of  
Righteousness, and his Precise Family,  
when He and his Sons talk'd to them  
of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judg-  
ment! Especially, when he told them  
that there was such a Flood coming,  
and that he was building that Ark to  
preserve himself and his Household, what  
a Jest was he to the Men of Parts and  
Pleasure! How many Scornful and Gay  
Things were said upon this Occasion,  
while

S E R M. while the Work went forward by Those,  
 v. who thought themselves very Wise, and  
 ~~~~~ Him very foolish ! But the Fountains of  
 the great deep were broken up, and the
 Windows of Heaven open'd ; and Then
 they began to change their Opinions
 when (alas !) it was too late to learn.

In the next great Period after the Flood, the true Religion was confin'd to the single Nation of the *Jews* : and one may think it strange at first sight, that if it were the True Religion, it should be so confined ; that the wise and knowing Part of Mankind should not discern the Strength of the Evidence that was brought for the Divine Original of the Law of *Moses*, nor receive the God of *Israel* for Their God. But, if we consider a little farther, we shall be satisfied, that the true Reason of Mens Infidelity, throughout this long Period of Time, was, a Mean and Contemptuous Notion they had entertain'd of the *Jewish* People, and of their Rites and Ceremonies. The Wise Men of the *East*, in the Earliest Ages, and the Philosophers of the *West*, in Later Times,
had

had too high an Opinion of themselves, S E R M.
and too low an one of that Little, Nar- v.
~~~~~  
row-soul'd Superstitious Nation, to sub-  
mit themselves to be taught by them.  
The *Jews* were a Proverb and a By-word  
to the rest of the World, the perpetual  
Subject of their Scorn and Reproach:  
And who can think (may we suppose  
one of these Wise Heathens to have said)  
that Truth should lie hid among such an  
*odd* sort of People, in such a little Spot of  
the Word?

And thus, again, when Christianity  
first appear'd, it made no great Progress  
among the Disputers of this World,  
among the Men of Wit and Subtlety, for  
this very Reason; *because* they were Scorn-  
ers. The Gospel was to the *Jews* (to  
the most Learned and Proud Sect among  
the *Jews*, the *Pharisees*, a *stumbling block*;) <sup>1 Cor. i.</sup>  
and to those of higher Repute among <sup>23.</sup>  
the *Greeks*, *foolishness*. The great Pre-  
tenders to Knowledge every where una-  
nimously condemn'd and derided it, as a  
poor and low System of Principles; and  
could never once think of humbling their  
Minds,

S E R M. Minds, to entertain the Simplicity of the  
v. Gospel.

How should the Great Lords of the Earth, who swarm in all the Delights of Sense, and thought themselves born to enjoy them, submit to be talk'd out of their Pleasures and their Privileges by a few Ignorant Fishermen, and Tent-makers? The Story of the Propagation of the Gospel in *Jewry*, might perhaps make a part of the Conversation in the Court of *Tiberius*; it was, probably, such a Subject of Discourse to Them, as the *Quietists* in *Italy* were to Us, at their first appearing. The Novelty of the Thing might occasion some Reflections and Enquiries: But it was not to be expected, that Men of Pleasure and Parts should give themselves the Trouble of Examining nicely into the Pretensions with which this New Religion set up, or of considering, in good Earnest, whether they ought to become Profelytes to it.

We are not to wonder, therefore, if, in some Ages after Christianity, we find not

not much laid to the Advantage of it, in ~~s E R M.~~  
the Writings of those Eminent *Greeks* <sup>v.</sup>  
and *Romans*, who are allow'd to have   
been the best Masters of Polite Thought  
and Expression. Alas! *Porphyry* must  
have been contented to confess the Va-  
nity of Philosophy, and *Lucian* must in  
great measure have forgone his Skill in  
Satire; the Witty Libertines of those  
Times must have parted with much of  
the Esteem they had, and with most of  
their Pleasures, if they had once admit-  
ted the Truth of Christianity: And,  
therefore, they agreed in running down  
the Reputation of that, lest they should  
lose their Own.

And, as it was immediately after our Saviour's coming, so hath it been ever since, to this very Day. The Doctrines of the Cross have never in any Age met, nor will they ever in any future Age, meet with a kind and hearty Reception, among Those, who *fit in the Seat of the Scorners.*

But let us not therefore be dejected, because there are Many whom the World  
esteeems

S E R M. esteems, who yet esteem not Us, and  
 v. our Holy and Undefiled Religion ! Nei-  
 ~~~ther let us suspect ourselves, as being  
 out of the way and impos'd upon, because
 Men of a greater Reach perhaps, and of
 a more improv'd Understanding than We,
 are not of our Mind. *Solomon*, who was
 certainly a Man of Understanding, and
 who was of our Mind, doth, in a very
 few Words (which I cannot repeat too
 often) afford us a full and comfortable
 Solution of the Case ; *A Scorer* (faith
 he) *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*

From the Account of former Times it
 appears to us, that thus it always *bath been* ; and from Reflections on the Nature
 of Man, that thus it necessarily *must be* ;
 and, therefore, let us possess our Souls in
 Patience and Peace ; and go on in the
 plain Paths of Godliness and Honesty,
 without turning to the Right, or to the
 Left, for whatever Men scornfully witty
 can say of us, or to us.

Let us beg of Him, *who scorneth the*
 Prov. iii. *Scorners, but giveth Grace unto the Low-*
 34. *ly, let us beg of him to Bestow on us, to*
Preserve,

Preserve, and Increase in us that *serious & E.R.M.*
and humble Frame of Spirit, which alone v.
can qualify us for a Right Apprehension
of the Truths and Mysteries of the Go-
spel ; and which is, therefore, certainly,
Preferable to all other Endowments of
Mind, however the World may have mis-
plac'd the greatest Part of its Esteem upon
them.

And let us, in order to this End,
frequently take to ourselves the hum-
ble Words of the *Son of Syrach*, and
say, *O Lord, Father and God of my Life,* Eccles.
give me not a proud Look; but turn xxiii. 4.
away from thy Servant always an haugh-
ty Mind ! Turn away from me vain Hopes
and Concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him
up that is desirous always to serve thee !
Let not the Greediness of the Belly, nor
Lust of the Flesh take bold of me ; and
give not over Me thy Servant to an Im-
pudent Mind !

And as for those who contemn Us,
and Our Narrow Principles, and who
make us their Derision daily, let us
(in the Words of the Apostle) *not cease* Eph. i.
Eph. i. 16, 17.
to 18.

S E R M. to make mention of them in our Prayers,
v. that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of Glory, may give unto them
the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to
the Acknowledgment of him: The Eyes
of their Understanding being enlightened, that
they may know, what is the Hope of his
Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory
of his Inheritance in the Saints.

A

DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the Right Honourable

The Lady CUTTS,

An. Dom. M. DC. XCVIII.

ECCLES. vii. 2.

It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting : for that is the End of all Men ; and the Living will lay it to Heart.

THE first Step towards Happiness S E R M.
T is, to correct our false Oppinions VI.
concerning it, by learning to esteem W W

S E R M. every thing, not according to that Rate
v i. and Value, which the World, or our
~~~ own mistaken Imaginations may have  
placed upon it, but according to that  
which in itself, and in the Accounts  
of right Reason and Religion, it really  
bears.

The Preacher therefore hath, in this Chapter, laid together a Set of Religious Paradoxes, which, however they may startle and shock us a little, upon the first hearing, yet, when closely examin'd, will appear to be clear unquestionable Truths, by which the whole Course of our Lives ought to be steer'd and govern'd.

In the first Verse of this Chapter (the Verse before the Text) he tells us, that *a Good Name is better than precious Ointment, and the Day of one's Death than the Day of one's Birth.* *A Good Name is better than precious Ointment;* i.e. rich Oils, and sweet Odors (in the Use of which the People of the *East* much delighted) are not half so grateful, or valuable, as a good Reputation, well founded : This

This is more truly fragrant, more diffusive of its Influence, more durable: It gives a Man greater Comfort and Refreshment, while he is Living; and preserves him, when Dead, better than the most precious Embalmings.

And again, *The Day of one's Death is better than the Day of one's Birth*; i. e. the *Day of the Death* of such an one, as possesses and deserves a *Good Name*; of such an one, as hath liv'd well, and dy'd well, is preferable by far to the *Day of his Birth*: For it gives him Admittance into a State of perfect Rest and Tranquillity, of undisturb'd Joy and Happiness; whereas the Day of his Birth was only an Inlet into a troublesome World, and the Beginning of Sorrows.

And then it follows, very naturally, in the Words of the Text, that *It is better also to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting*. As Death to a good Man is more advantageous than Life; so to a wise Man the Contemplation of the first is more desirable than all the Enjoyments of the

S E R M. Latter: He had much rather be present  
 vi. at the sad Solemnities of a Funeral,  
 ~~~~~ than partake of those Festival Rejoicings,  
 which are usual in all Nations, but especially among the Jews, at the Birth of a Child.

Hard Doctrine this, to the Men of Liberty and Pleasure! who have said to themselves, *Come on, let us enjoy the things that are present, let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us; let us Crown ourselves with Rose-buds before they be withered.* Hard Doctrine, I say, it is to such Men as these; and which will run the Hazard of not being entertain'd by them. The Wise Man therefore hath condescended to prove, as well as assert it, and to back the severo Rule he hath laid down, with very convincing Reasons: *For that, saith he, is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to heart.* As if he had said, This Dark and Melancholy State it will one Day certainly come to Our share to try; and what must some time

or other be undergone, ought to be consider'd beforehand : this is *the End of all Men* ; and all Men therefore should have their Eye and their Thoughts upon it. And then farther ---- We are most of us so immers'd in the Pleasures, and so taken up with the Follies of Life, that we need all Methods of reducing our straggling Thoughts and Desires, and of giving ourselves a serious Frame and Composure of Mind : and of all Methods, this of repairing to the House of Mourning, is best adapted to that Good End, and will soonest and most effectually bring it about ; *The Living will lay it to Heart.*

I have largely explain'd the Connexion and Meaning of the Words, which have been pitched upon to employ Your Thoughts on this mournful Occasion. The next thing should be, to excite You to a Compliance with the Direction there given, by the particular Arguments suggested in the Text, and by several other powerful and moving Considerations : to prove to You, the Folly and

S E R M. Emptiness of a Life led all in Mirth, and
v i. Jollity, and Pleasure; the Wisdom and
Reasonableness of shifting the Scene
sometimes, of turning the gloomy side
of Things towards ourselves, of ex-
changing *the House of Feasting* for *the*
House of Mourning, and of making a
discreet and decent Use of those sad
Opportunities of Reflection, which God,
mercifully severe, is pleas'd to put into
our Hands.

But I am prevented in this part of my Discourse, by the Pious Design of this present Assembly; You are already doing that which I should recommend to You from the Text; paying the Tribute of Your Tears to the Memory of One, whose Worth you knew, and whose Loss You sensibly feel; and bewailing Her, under the different Characters She bore of a Wife, a Daughter, a Relation, a Mistress, a Friend.

All, therefore, I have to do, on this Occasion, is, to fall in with Your Pious Grief, already rais'd, and to bear a Part in it, by dwelling together with You a while

while on the Character of that *Incompara- s E R M.*
parable Lady, whose Death we lament ; by vi.
uniting, as well as I am able, the scatter'd 
Parts of it, and recalling to Your Thoughts
at once the several Excellencies and Per-
fections of which it was compos'd : which
made her belov'd and reverenc'd by You
while Living, and will make her Me-
mory ever Dear and Desirable to You,
now she is Dead ; and which rais'd her
above the greatest Part of her Sex, much
more than any Outward Marks of Rank
and Disfunction.

It is now, after her Decease, a fit Time
to speak of her in those Terms of Respect
which she deserv'd : for in her Life-time
she would not suffer it, and took some
Pains to avoid it ; hiding as many of her
Virtues as she could from Publick Obser-
vation, and so behaving herself in the
Practice of those she could not hide, as
shew'd, she had no mind to be told of
them : discountenancing, as far as lay
in her Power, that odious and designing
Flattery, which, through the wicked
Fashion of an Infincere World, is now
thought

SE R M. thought to be a kind of Customary Debt
VI. due to her Sex, and almost a necessary
~~~~ Part of good Breeding.

But though the Living can seldom be  
prais'd with Decency, yet the Dead cer-  
tainly often may ; especially such of the  
Dead, as had a very unusual Degree of  
Indifference and Unconcernedness for what  
was said to their Advantage, while they  
were Living.

There is a publick Homage due to  
Desert, if we take a proper Season of  
paying it ; and the Ministers of the Go-  
fpel, who are entrusted with so many  
Methods of promoting Piety in the  
World, are, among the rest, entrusted  
with This, of giving Honour where Ho-  
nour is due ; and of truly representing  
to the Minds of Men such shining Pat-  
terns of Virtue, as are most likely to en-  
gage their Attention, and provoke their  
Imitation : It is our immediate and par-  
ticular Employment to praise God ; and  
it doth, no doubt, in some measure also  
belong to us, to praise those that are Like  
him.

And

And now how shall I enter upon this S E R M.  
fruitful Argument? What Particular of VI.  
her comprehensive Character shall I first  
choose to insist on? Let us determine our  
selves to begin there where she always  
began, at her Devotions. In these she  
was very Punctual and Regular: Morn-  
ing and Evening came not up more con-  
stantly in their Course, than her stated  
Hours of Private Prayer; which she ob-  
serv'd not formally, as a Task, but re-  
turn'd to them always with Desire, De-  
light, and Eagerness. She would on no  
Occasion dispense with herself from pay-  
ing this Duty: no Busines, no common  
Accident of Life could divert her from  
it: She esteem'd it her great Honour and  
Happiness to attend upon God; and she  
resolv'd to find Leisure for That, for what-  
ever else she might want it.

How she behav'd herself in these Se-  
cret Transactions, between God and her  
own Soul, is known to Him alone whom  
She worshipp'd: But, if we may guess  
at her Privacies by what was seen of her  
in Publick, we may be sure, that she was  
full

SER.M. full of Humility, Devotion, and Fervency ; for so she remarkably was always, during the time of Divine Service. Her Behaviour was then very devout and solemn, and yet the most decent, easy, and unaffected, that could be ; there was nothing in it either negligent and loose, or extravagant and strain'd : it was throughout such, as declar'd itself not to be the Work of the Passions, but to flow from the Understanding, and from a clear Knowledge of the true Grounds and Principles of that her reasonable Service.

This Knowledge she attain'd by early Instructions, by much Reading, and Meditation, (to which she appear'd from her Childhood to be addicted) and, give me leave to add, by a very diligent and exact Attendance on the Lessons of Piety which were utter'd from the Pulpit ; which no one practis'd better, because no one delighted in, listen'd to, or consider'd more. For at these Performances, she was all Attention, all Ear ; she kept her Heart fix'd and intent on its holy Work, by keeping her Eye from wandering.

It

It was her Misfortune indeed, that the ~~S E R M.~~  
Exemplariness of her Behaviour call'd off ~~v i.~~  
the Eyes of several to observe it; but ~~v i.~~  
more Her, and their Misfortune, that,  
when they had seen it, and satisfy'd their  
Curiosity, they did not go on also to  
imitate it. She often express'd her Dis-  
satisfaction at that Indecency of Car-  
riage which universally prevails in our  
Churches; and wonder'd that They  
should be most careless of their Beha-  
viour towards God, who are most scrupu-  
lously nice in exacting and paying all  
the little Decencies that are in Use among  
Men.

When the Bread of Life was distri-  
buted, she was sure to be there, a devout  
and never-failing Communicant; and  
the Strictness of her Attention, and the  
Reverence of her Behaviour were, if it  
were possible, rais'd and improv'd on  
those Occasions: The lively Image of a  
crucify'd Saviour, then exhibited, could  
not but make very moving Impressions  
on a Mind that abounded with so much  
pious Warmth and Tenderness.

S E R M. Books she took Pleasure in, and made  
iv. good Use of; chiefly Books of Divinity,  
and Devotion; which she studied, and re-  
lished above all others. History too had  
very often a Share in her Reflections; and  
sometimes she look'd into Pieces of pure  
Diversion and Amusement, whenever she  
found them written in such a Way, as  
to be innocently entertaining. I need not  
tell You, to how narrow a Choice she  
was, by this means, confin'd.

But of all Books, the Book of God  
was That, in which she was most de-  
lighted and employ'd; and which was  
never, for any considerable time, out of  
her Hands. No doubt, she knew, and  
felt the great Use and sweet Influence of  
it, in calming her Mind, and regulating  
her Desires, and lifting up her Thoughts  
towards Heaven, in feeding and spreading  
that Holy Flame, which the Love of God  
had kindled in her Heart, and which she  
took care, by this means, to keep perpe-  
tually burning.

When she met with any thing there,  
or in any other pious Book, which would  
be

be of remarkable Use to her in the Con- s E R M.  
duct of her Life and Affairs, she trusted vi.  
not her Memory with it; not even that u u  
excellent Memory, which she safely trust-  
ed with Things of lesser Moment; but  
immediately committed it to Writing.  
Many Observations of this kind she hath  
left, drawn from good Authors, but chief-  
ly from those Sacred Pages; in collec-  
ting which, whether her Judgment, or  
her Piety, had the largest Share, it is not  
easy to say.

The Passages of Holy Writ which she  
took Notice of, were indeed commonly  
such, as related either to the Concerns  
of her Spiritual Estate, or to Matters of  
Prudence: but it appears also that she  
spent some time in meditating on those  
Places where the Sublimest Points of  
Christian Doctrine are contain'd, and in  
possessing her self with a deep Sense of  
the wonderful Love of God towards us,  
manifested in the mysterious Work of  
our Redemption; for she had something  
more than what, in the Language of  
this loose Age, is call'd, *a Lady's Reli-  
gion.*

S E R M. gion. She endeavour'd to understand the  
VI. great Articles of Faith, as well as to  
practise the good Rules of Life, contain'd  
in the Gospel ; and she sensibly found,  
that the best way to excite herself to the  
Practice of the one, was to endeavour to  
understand the other.

And in this Book of God she was more particularly conversant on God's Day ; a Day ever held sacred by her, and which, therefore, always in her Family wore a Face of Devotion suitable to the Dignity of it. It was truly a Day of Rest to all under her Roof : her Servants were then dismiss'd from a good part of their Attendance upon her, that they might be at Liberty to attend on their great Lord and Master, whom both She, and They, were equally bound to obey. There was such a Silence and Solemnity at that time observ'd by all about her, as might have become the *House of Mourning* ; and yet so much Ease and Serenity visible in their Looks (at least in her Looks there was) as shew'd, that They, who were in the *House of Feasting*, were not better satisfy'd.

tisfy'd. Thus did she prepare and dispose s E R M. herself for the Enjoyment of that perfect VI. Rest, the Celebration of that endless Sabbath, which she is now enter'd upon ; thus did she practise beforehand upon Earth, the Duties, the Devotions, the Customs, and Manners of Heaven.

To secure her Proficiency in Virtue, she kept an exact Journal of her Life ; in which was contain'd the History of all her Spiritual Affairs, and of the several Turns that happen'd in her Soul : A true, naked, impartial History ! and yet, (which seldom happens in true ones) such an one, where the Person describ'd is not charg'd with many Blemishes and Failings. Alas for Us, that the Thread of it was no longer continu'd !

In this Glass she every Day dress'd her Mind, to this faithful Monitor she repair'd for Advice and Direction ; compar'd the past with the present, judg'd of what would be, by what had been, observ'd nicely the several successive Degrees of Holiness she got, and of Human Infirmitiy she shook off ; and trac'd

S E R M. every single Step she took onward in her  
VI. Way towards Heaven.

One would have imagin'd, that so much Exactness and Severity in private should have affected a little her publick Actions and Discourses, and have slid insensibly into her Carriage; and yet nothing could be more free, simple, and natural. She had the Reality, without the Outside and Shew of Strictness: all her Rules, all her Performances sat so well and graceful upon her, that they appear'd to be as much her Pleasure as her Duty; She was, in the midst of them, perfectly easy to her self, and a Delight to all that were about her: ever Cheerful in her Behaviour, but withal ever Calm and Even; her Satisfaction, like a deep untroubled Stream, ran on, without any of that Violence, or Noise, which sometimes the shallowest Pleasures do most abound in.

However, Cheerful and Agreeable as she was, yet she never carried her good Humour so far, as to smile at a Prophane, an Ill-natur'd, or an Unmannerly Jest;

on

on the contrary, in her highest Mirth, it ~~S E R M.~~  
made her remarkably Grave and Serious. v1.  
She had an extraordinary Nicety of Tem-  
per as to all the least Approaches to  
Faults of that kind, and shew'd a very  
quick and sensible Concern at any thing,  
which she thought it did not become  
either her to hear, or others to say.

True Piety, which consists chiefly in  
an Humility and Submission of Mind to-  
wards God, is attended always with Hu-  
mility and Goodness towards his Crea-  
tures; and so it was in this *Excellent  
Lady*. Never was there a more deep,  
and unfeign'd, and artless Lowliness of  
Mind seen in her Rank and Station: As  
far as she was plac'd above the most of  
the World, she convers'd as it were upon  
the Level with all of them; and yet,  
when she stooped the lowest towards  
them, she took care even at that time  
to preserve the Respect that was due to  
her from them. She had so much true  
Merit, that she was not afraid of being  
look'd into, and therefore durst be fami-  
liar: And the Effect of that Familiarity

S E R M. was, that, by being better known, she  
v.i. was more lov'd and valu'd. Not only  
no one of her Inferiors ever came uneasy  
from her, (as hath been said of some  
Great Ones;) but no one ever went uneas-  
y to her; so assured were all before-  
hand of her Sweetness of Temper, and  
obliging Reception! When she open'd  
her Lips, Gracious Words always pro-  
ceeded from thence, and *in her Tongue*  
*was the Law of Kindness.* Her Reser-  
vedness, and Love of Privacy, might pos-  
sibly be misinterpreted sometimes for an  
Overvalue of herself, by those who did  
not know her; but the least Degree of  
Acquaintance made all those Suspicions  
vanish. For, tho' her Perfections both of  
Body and Mind were very extraordina-  
ry, yet she was the only Person that  
seem'd, without any Endeavour to seem,  
insensible of them. She was, 'tis true,  
in as much Danger of being Vain, as  
great Beauty, and a good Natural Wit  
could make her: But she had such an  
Over-balance of Discretion, that she was  
never in Pain to have the one seen, or  
the

the other heard. Indeed, this was parti- s E R M. cular to her, and a very distinguishing Part vi. of her Character, that she never studied  Appearances, nor made any Advances towards the Opinion of the World ; being contented to *be* whatever was Good or Deserving, without endeavouring in the least to be *thought* so : and this, not out of any affected Disregard to Publick Esteem, but merely from a Modesty and Easiness of Nature, which made her give way to others, who were more willing to be observ'd. And yet she had also her Hours of Openness and Freedom, when her Soul eas'd it self to Familiars and Friends ; and then *out of the good Treasure of her Heart* what *good Things* did she bring forth ? And with what Delight was she listned to by those who had the Happiness to converse with her ? So that a Doubt it is, whether she were most to be admired for what she did, or for what she did not say. It was wonderful that One, who, when she pleas'd, could discourse so fitly and so freely, should yet chuse to be silent on so many Occasions ; and

S E R M. it was surprizing that She, who was  
VI. such a Lover of Silence, should, whenever  
she spake, charin all that heard her.

We may be sure, that, whilst she thus commanded her Tongue, she kept as strict and watchful a Guard upon her Passions; those especially of the rough and troublesome kind, with which she was scarce ever seen to be disquieted. She knew not what the Disorders of Anger were, even on Occasions that might seem to justify, if not to require it: As much as she hated Vice, she chose rather to look it out of Countenance, than to be severe against it; and to win the bad over to the Side of Virtue by her Example, than by her Rebukes.

Her sweet Deportment towards Those who were with her, could be outdone by nothing but her Tenderness in relation to the Absent; whom she was sure to think, and speak as well of as was possible: And when their Character was plainly such, as could have no good Colours put upon it, yet she would shew her

her Dislike of it no otherwisc than by say- SIR R M.  
ing nothing of them. Neither her Good-  
Nature, nor her Religion, neither her  
Civility, nor her Prudence, would suffer  
her to censure any one: She thought she  
had enough to do at home, in that way,  
without looking much abroad; and there-  
fore turn'd the Edge of all her Reflections  
upon her self. Indeed she spar'd others  
as much as if she had been afraid of them,  
and her self as little, as if she had had  
many Faults that wanted mending: And  
yet, 'twas because she could, after the se-  
verest Scrutiny, find no great Harm in her  
self, that she could scarce be brought to  
suspect any in others.

Her Conversation might, for this Rea-  
son, seem to want somewhat of that Salt  
and Smartness, which the ill-natur'd Part  
of the World are so fond of; a Want,  
that she could easily have supply'd, would  
her Principles have given her leave: but  
her settled Opinion was, that the Good  
Name of any one was too nice and se-  
rious a thing to be play'd with; and that  
it was a foolish kind of Mirth, which, in

IV.

S E R M. order to divert some, hurt others. She  
VI. could never bring her self to think, that  
the only thing which gave Life and Spirit  
to Discourse, was, to have Somebody's  
Faults the Subject of it; or, that the Plea-  
sure of a Visit lay, in giving up the Com-  
pany to one anothers Sport and Malice,  
by turns. And if these are the chief  
Marks of Wit and Good-breeding, it must  
be confess'd that she had neither.

With all this Goodness, Gentleness,  
and Meekness of Nature, she had at the  
same time a Degree of Spirit and Firm-  
ness, unusual in her Sex; and was parti-  
cularly observ'd to have a wonderful Pre-  
sence of Mind in any Accident of Danger:  
for Innocence and Courage are nearly  
ally'd, and even in the softest Tempers,  
where the one of these is in Perfection,  
there will and must be a good Degree of  
the other.

Shall I say any thing of that innate  
Modesty of Temper, and spotless Purity  
of Heart, which shone throughout her  
whole Life and Conversation? A Quality  
so strictly requir'd of her Sex, that it may  
be

be thought not so properly commendable s E R M.  
in any of them to have it, as infamous to  
want it. However, in the most common  
and ordinary Graces, there are uncom-  
mon Heights and Degrees ; and it was the  
particular Happiness of this *Lady* Remark-  
ably to excel in every Virtue that belong'd  
to her ; even in those, in which Christians  
of the lowest Attainments do in some  
degree Excel.

VI.

Shall I add, that this Love of Purity  
was the Cause, why she banish'd her self  
from those Publick Diversions of the  
Town, at which it was scarce possible  
to be present, without hearing somewhat  
that wounded chaste Ears ; and for which,  
she thought, no Amends could be made  
to Virtue by any degree of Wit, or Hu-  
mour, with which, perhaps, they might  
otherwise abound ? These good Quali-  
ties, she knew, serv'd only to recom-  
mend the Poison, and make it palatable ;  
and, therefore, she thought it a Piece of  
Service to other People, (who might per-  
haps be influenc'd by her Example) to  
stand off, tho' she her self were secur'd  
from

SE R M. from the Infection. This, questionless,  
VI. was One Reason of her allowing her  
self in those dangerous Entertainments so  
sparingly; but it was but One of Many: She had really neither Relish nor Leisure for them; nor for a thousand other things, which the World miscalls Pleasures. Not that she wanted naturally a Taste for any thing of this kind; for her Apprehension was fine, and her Wit very good, and very ready at Command, whenever she pleas'd to exercise it: but she had turn'd her Thoughts so much towards Things of Use and Importance, that Matters of mere Pleasure grew flat and indifferent to her; She was so taken up with the Care of improving her Understanding, and bettering her Life, in the Discharge of the Offices necessary to her Rank, in the Duties of her Closet, and the Concerns of her Family, that, she found, at the Foot of the Account, but little Time (and had less Mind) to give in to those vain Amusements.

She did not think it (as, I fear, it is too often thought) the peculiar Happi-

ness and Privilege of the Great, to have s E R M. nothing to do; but took care to fill every VI. Vacant Minute of her Life with some  useful nor innocent Employment. The several Hours of the Day had their peculiar Busines allotted to them, (whether it were Conversation, or Work, Reading, or Domestick Affairs) each of which came up orderly in its turn; and was, as the Wise Man speaks, (to be sure, under Her Management it was) *beautiful in its Season.*

And this Regularity of hers, was free and natural, without Formality or Constraint; it was neither troublesome to Her, nor to those that were near her: When, therefore, any Accident interven'd, it was interrupted at that Time with as much Ease as it was at other Times practis'd: for among all her discretionary Rules, the chief was, to seem to have none; and to make those she had laid down to herself give way always to Circumstances and Occasions.

She wrought with her own Hands often, when she could more profitably, and  
plea-

SE R M. pleasingly have employ'd her Time in Meditation, or Books: but she was willing  
to set an Example to those, who could not; and she took care, therefore, that her Example should be well follow'd by all that were under her immediate Influence: for she knew well, that the Description of a good Wife and a Perfect Woman in the *Proverbs*, (a Description which she much delighted in, and often read) was spent chiefly in commanding that Diligence by which *Sbe looketh well to the Ways of ber Housbold, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness*: And she knew likewise also, that the Person, whose Words these are said to be, was no less a Woman than the Mother of King *Lemuel*.

Diligence and Frugality are Sisters: and She, therefore, who was so well acquainted with the one, was not likely to be a Stranger to the other. She was strictly careful of her Expences; and yet knew how to be generous and to abound, when the Occasion requir'd it. But of all Ways of good Management, she lik'd That the worst which shuts our Hands to the Poor; towards

towards whom she always shew'd herself ~~S E R M.~~  
very Compassionate and Charitable. Of vi.  
the other Delights, with which an high  
Fortune furnish'd her, she was almost in-  
sensible; but on this Account she valu'd  
it, that it gave her an Opportunity of pur-  
suing the several Pleasures of Beneficence,  
and of tasting all the Sweets of Well-  
doing. *She delivered the Poor that  
cried, and the Fatherless, and Him that  
had none to help him: The Blessing of  
him that was ready to perish came upon  
her, and she caus'd the Widow's Heart  
to sing.* Very easy, sure, will this make  
her Audit at the great Day of Account;  
That Charity will, doubtless, be allow'd  
to screen her few Infirmities and Faults,  
which is of Efficacy sufficient to *cover the  
Multitude of Sins.*

In the Exercise of this, and of all other  
Virtues, She was wonderfully secret;  
endeavouring to come up, as near as she  
could, to the Rule of *not letting her  
right Hand know what her left Hand  
did.* And this Secrecy of hers she ma-  
naged so well, that some of the most  
remark-

S E R M. remarkable Instances of her Goodness were

IV. not known, till after her Death ; no, not  
by Him, who was partaker of all her Joys  
and Sorrows.

Retirement and Privacy she always lov'd, and therefore chose it, when, after the Death of a near Relation, who had the Care of Educating Her, she was at liberty to have liv'd otherwise. From that Time to her Marriage, which was more than Three Years, she hid her self in the Country ; having an early and settled Aversion to the Noise and Inconveniences of a Town-life ; and too little an Opinion of herself, to think, that it was so much the Interest of Virtue and Religion, as it really was, that she should be known and distinguish'd.

When, afterwards, she went to Court, (as it was necessary for Her sometimes to do) she did it with an Air, which plainly shew'd, that she went to pay her Duty there, and not to delight her self in the Pomp and Glitter of that Place. Had she gone thither soon enough to see that *Good and Glorious Queen*, who was the Orna-

Ornament of It, and of her Sex, she had s E R M. been taken, we may presume, into her <sup>VI.</sup> Intimacy: for their Minds were nearly ally'd, and their Characters, and Manners, and Ways of Life not unlike; allowing for the Difference of Stations.

I need not, I cannot well say more of her: and if, therefore, I have fallen short of her Character, (as I am sensible I have, in many Parts of it, which are here mention'd, and in others, which are still left untouched) I desire, those particular Defects may be supply'd from this General Account; that she did not, a little resemble *Her*, who was the Pattern of all that is Good and Amiable 'in Woman-kind.

Whether she had this excellent Pattern in her Eye, I am not able to say, when, soon after her Marriage, she declar'd to several Friends her Thoughts, that Every Woman of Quality was as much more Oblig'd, as she was more Enabled than other Women, to do Good in the World; and that the shortest and surest Way of doing this was, to endeavour.

S E R M. vour, by all means, to be as good a Chri-  
vI. stian, and as good a Wife, and as good a  
Friend, as was possible.

She endeavour'd to be all this, and she fell not far short of it: for she excell'd in all the Characters that belong'd to her, and was in a great measure equal to all the Obligations that she lay under: She was devout, without Superstition; strict, without Ill-humour: good-natur'd, without Weakness; cheerful, without Levity; regular, without Affectation. She was, to her Husband the best of Wives, the most agreeable of Companions, and most faithful of Friends; to her Servants, the best of Mistresses; to her Relations, extremely respectful; to her Inferiors, very obliging: and by all that knew her, either nearly, or at a Distance, She was reckon'd, and confess'd to be one of the best of Women.

And yet all this Goodness, and all this Excellence, was bounded within the Compass of eighteen Years, and as many Days: for no longer was she allow'd to live among us. She was snatch'd out of  
the

the World as soon almost as she had made s E R M.  
her Appearance in it; like a Jewel of high VI.  
Price, just shewn a little, and then put  
up again; and we were depriv'd of her by  
that time We had learnt to value her. But  
Circles may be compleat, tho' small; the  
Perfection of Life doth not consist in the  
Length of it: if it did, Our Saviour to be  
sure would not have dy'd so soon after  
thirty.

Short as her Life was, She had time  
enough to adorn the several States of Vir-  
ginity and Marriage; and to experience  
the Sadness of a kind of Widowhood too:  
for such she accounted it, when her Lord  
was long absent from her; mourn'd as  
much, and refus'd as much to be com-  
forted, till his Return.

As her Life was short, so her Death was  
sudden; She was call'd away in haste, and  
without any Warning. One day she  
droop'd, and the next she dy'd; nor was  
there the Distance of many Hours between  
her being very easy in this World, and  
very happy in another.

S E R M. However, tho' she was seiz'd thus sud-  
~~~~~ vi. denly by Death, yet was she not surpriz'd ;  
for she was ever in Preparation for it ; *ber Loins girt*, (as the Scripture speaks) *and ber Lamp ready trimm'd, and burning* :
The Moment also that She was taken ill, she was just risen from her Knees, and had made an end of her Morning Devotions. And to such an One a sudden Death could be no Misfortunc. We pray, indeed, againſt it, because few, very few, are fit for it ; and the Church is to proportion her Forms to the Generality of Christians : But where a Good Soul is in perfect Readiness, there the sooner the fatal Stroke is struck, the better ; all Delays in this Case, are uncomfortable to the Dying, as well as to those Friends who survive them.

In truth, she could not be call'd away more hastily, than she was willing to go. She had been us'd so much to have *her Conversation in Heaven*, and her Soul had been so often upon the Wing thither, that it readily left its Earthly Station upon the least Notice from Above ; and took
the

the very first Opportunity of quitting her s E R M. Body, without lingering or expecting a se- VI. cond Summons. She stay'd no longer af-
ter she was call'd, than to assure her Lord
of her entire Resignation to the Divine
Will ; and of her having no manner of
Uneasiness upon her Mind ; and to take
her Leave of him, with all the Expressions
of Tenderness. When this was over,
she had nothing more to do with her
Senses ; she sunk immediately under her
Illness, and, after a short unquiet Slum-
ber, slept in Peace.

Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excellent
Lady, whose Character I have so far repre-
sented, as my Time, and the Measure of
such Discourses as these, would suffer me ;
and endeavour'd to renew a faint Image of
her several Virtues and Perfections upon
your Minds. I have done it in a confus'd
manner, and without the nice Divisions of
Art ; for Grief is not Methodical : It is
enough, if I have been able to set before
you some Resemblance of her, tho' I
should not have done it after the best and
liveliest manner : When the Life is gone,

SECRET. a Picture drawn even by an unskilful
Hand, hath its Use and Value; and those
who lov'd what it doth (however un-
equally) represent, will be touch'd at the
Sight of it.

You all are so, I question not, touch'd
by what hath been laid, in various Man-
ners, and in different Degrees, as Your
Relation to her was nearer, or remoter;
as you knew more, or less of her. But you
do not mourn alone; many *Living* there
are, that do now, and many more there
are, who shall hereafter, when her Cha-
racter hath spread itself, *lay it to heart*;
The World hath had a Loss, as well as
You; True Virtue and Piety have suffer'd
in her Fall; and all, therefore, that have
any Regard for these, shall bear a Part
with You in your Sorrows.

The *True Servants of God* shall *lay it*
to heart, who from their Souls desire the
Increase of Religion and Goodness, and
know the Power and Influence of so
sweet, so winning, so perfect a Pattern
as was set by Her; who promis'd Them-
selves a mighty Countenance, and the
World

World strange Advantages, from her ex- s E R M.
emplary Sanctity and Goodness.

VI.

They that *minister in holy Things* will *lay it to heart*, to whom she repair'd, with so much Constancy and Seriousness, to hear the Divine Oracles explain'd by them, and to *enquire the Law at their Mouths*. They will consider what an Helper and Furtherer of their pious Labours they have lost; and how much more lifeless and ineffectual their Discourses are now likely to be, than they were heretofore, when she encouraged those Exercises by her Presence, and taught others to attend, by the strict Attention she her self paid to what was said in them. In whatever Congregation she appear'd, she secretly rais'd and improv'd the Devotions of the Place; every Day of her Life preach'd up Goodness, as effectually as the most rational and moving Sermon.

The *Enquirers into the Methods and Mysteries of Divine Providence* will *lay it to heart*. Why will they say, when God hath most Work to do in the World, is one of the best and most faithful Instruments

S E R M. ments of his Glory call'd out of it? Why

v. i. is she snatch'd away from us, at a Time
when we could least have spar'd her? when Iniquity and Irreligion run high, and Piety is in Danger of growing out of Fashion, and out of Countenance? Why, in such a Juncture, is this *Good Lady* taken? And why are so many of her Sex, so unlike her, left? Is it in Mercy to her, or in Judgment to us? Is it because She was too good to live here, or because We were too wicked to deserve her Company? *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when we plead with Thee: yet let Us talk with Thee of thy Judgments!*

Her *Domestics* will lay it to heart, whom She shone upon always with a singular Goodness; who were near Witnesses of her most retir'd Graces and Virtues; and had the best Opportunities of forming themselves upon her admirable Model: and who will now (alas!) be destitute of her Example and Encouragement; of her sweet Advice, and gentle Reproofs; and will be left to live upon that Stock of Virtue, which hath been happily laid in by them,

them, that Measure of Goodness which s E R M.
They have already deriv'd, from attend- VI.
ing and observing Her. 

Finally, the *Poor* will *lay it to heart*,
whose Bowels she refresh'd, and whose
Wants she reliev'd; and was ever their
sure Refuge and Support, their kind and
merciful Patroness and Friend.

But, above all, her *Relations* will *lay it to heart* ; Those, to whom she was most
nearly join'd by Blood, or Love ; and
who had a more particular Interest in all
her Virtues ; They will lay their Hands on
their Breasts, *in the Day of Adversity*, and
confider, How have we offended, that we
are thus grievously punish'd ? and which
of our Miscarriages is it, that this heavy
Infliction is intended to reform ?

This is the wisest and best Use that can
be made of such Solemnities as these ; not,
by the means of them, to excite our truly
pious and Christian Grief to an immoder-
ate and unchristian Degree, nor *to sorrow*
as Men without hope ; but to take Occa-
sion from thence, to search and enquire
into our selves ; to learn the Meaning of
these

SE R M. these Divine Admonitions ; and, after we
VI. have interpreted them truely, to resolve
upon obeying them.

The Deceas'd Person, whose Loss we deplore, is happy without Question : Happy will the Living be also, if they thus wisely, thus effectually *lay it to heart ! It is better, doubtless, to go into the House of Mourning, than into the House of Feasting* ; but upon this Condition, that we come better out of the one, than out of the other : That we leave our Vanities and our Vices behind us ; that we lay aside our Affections towards this World, and our Indifference towards another ; that we put on holy and hearty Resolutions of being even Now, what we shall wish we had been, Hereafter, when the fatal Hour approaches ; and of *living the Life of this Righteous Person*, that we may *die her Death* too ; and be remember'd and lamented, as she is, by those who survive us.

Let us assure ourselves, that the best way of doing Honour to her Memory will be, by making her Character still live in Our

Our Lives and Actions ; that the truest In-^{s E R M.}stance of our Love and Esteem of Her is, ^{VI.} to endeavour to be like Her : for Thus, we shall even add some farther Degrees of Happiness and Honour to the vast Reward which she is already entitled to ; and shall make the Crown of Glory, she is to wear, bright as it will be, yet brighter, in the Day of General Retribution : Till when, (it may be piously suppos'd) the Saints departed are not admitted to the *Fulness of Joy*, that, in the mean time, the Influence of their good Examples and good Deeds spreading far and wide, That too, when their Accounts are made up, may be taken into them ; and the Fitnes and Proportionableness of their exceeding great Recompence, then bestow'd, may be manifested in the Sight of Angels and Men.

Wherefore, *lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees !* Think not so much and so long on the incomparable Character of the Deceas'd, as to forget the true Use You are to make of this afflicting Accident ; and to neglect those good Improvements under it, which the Wise

S E R M. Wife and Kind Inflicter expects at Your
 VI. Hands. You have paid Your last Respects
 ~~~~~ to Her, be not now wanting to Your  
 selves; but *Gird up the Loins of Your  
 Mind*, and be ye comforted!

The Consideration of what she was, which afflicts You, should much rather Clear and Revive You: Had She not been so good a Woman, You would with more reason have bewail'd her. But why should You continue to mourn for One, who is enter'd upon a State of unspeakable Joy? Why should You be dejected at Her Advancement?

She is gone to the Place, where all Tears are wip'd from her Eyes; where there is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying: She is gone, and her Works have follow'd, and will follow her, to her great and Endless Advantage. God grant that, when We also follow her, we may do it with as little Surprize, and as much Chearfulness!

*To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
 be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Ho-  
 nour, Adoration and Thanks, now,  
 and for ever! Amen.*

*The*

---

---

*The Wisdom of Providence manifested in  
the Revolutions of Government.*

---

A

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

## H O U S E   O F   C O M M O N S

A T

*St. Margaret's, Westminster,*

*May the 29th, 1701.*

Being the Anniversary for the Restora-  
tion of King *C H A R L E S* the  
Second.

---

EZEK. xxxvii. 3.

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can  
these Bones live? And I answered, O  
Lord God, thou knowest.*

THESE Words are part of that Vision of the Valley of Bones, where in the Prophet *Ezekiel* doth, in a very lofty

S E R M. lofty and lively manner, set out the Lost  
vii. and Hopeless State of *Israel*, then under  
~~~~ Captivity; and their future Recovery out  
of it, by the immediate Interposition of a
Divine Power, contrary to all Human
Probability and Appearance.

The Hand of the Lord was upon me,
(says he, at the Entrance of this Chapter)
and carried me out in the Spirit of the
Lord, and set me down in the midst of a
Valley which was full of Bones: i. e. the
Spirit of God represented to my Imagination
such a Sight: *And* (as he goes on) *cau-*
sed me to pass by them round about; and,
behold, there were Many in the open Val-
ley, and, lo! they were very Dry: i. e. they
were as numerous as the Dispers'd of *Israel*
in the Plains of *Mesopotamia*, and as desti-
tute of lively Juice and Moisture, as that
Exil'd People were of all hopes of Return-
ing. *And* he said unto me, *Son of Man,*
can these Bones live? And I answered, O
Lord God, thou knowest: i. e. Thou, that
art the Author and Bestower of Life, canst
doubtless restore it also, if thou will'st;
and when thou will'st; but whether thou
will'st

will'st please to restore it, or not, That s E R M.
Thou alone knowest. After which, the vii.
Spirit commands him to *Prophecy upon* ~~the~~
those Bones, and to say, *O ye dry Bones,*
bear the word of the Lord, together with
what follows, in the two next Verses.
And as I prophefied (continued he) *there*
was a noise, and behold a shaking; and the
Bones came together, Bone to his Bone,
And---lo! the Sinews and the Flesh came
upon them, and the Skin covered them
above: And at last, the Breath also came
into them, and they lived, and stood up
upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army.
Where we have, in the Prophetick way,
an Assurance given to the Jews, that,
though their Polity was now dissolv'd,
and their Tribes dispers'd, yet the time
was coming, when the Providence of
God would, in a wonderful Manner,
work out their Deliverance and Return;
re-unite the several Parts of their shat-
ter'd Frame, and make that People
live together once again under their
own Laws, and in their own Coun-
try. 'Tis true, this Vision hath, by
some

S E R M. some of the Antients, been understood of
vii. the *General Resurrection*; and by others,
of the *General Restoration of the Jews*
before the Second Coming of *Christ*; and
perhaps Both these Great Transactions
might be glanc'd at in it, and remotely in-
tended by it: For the Predictions of Scrip-
ture are generally so contriv'd, as to ex-
tend to more than one Event; so, as to be
fulfill'd at several Times, by several Steps
and Degrees of Accomplishment. How-
ever, That, which the Prophet had
chiefly and most nearly in his View, was,
the Recovery of the Jewish State from
the Captivity which it then groan'd under;
and to That therefore the Vision is, at the
Close of it, expressly applied: *Son of Man,*
these Bones are the whole house of Is-
rael: behold, they say, our bones are
dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off
for our parts: therefore, prophesy and say
unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Be-
bold, O my people, I will open your graves,
and cause you to come up out of your graves,
and bring you into the Land of Israel, and
ye shall know that I am the Lord.

The

The words of the Text, therefore, when s E R M. taken together with the other parts of ^{VII.} the Prophecy, to which they belong, carry in them this Consideration, “ That “ God doth sometimes interpose in be- “ half of lost States and Kingdoms, and “ delights to manifest his Power and “ Providence, in retrieving them from “ Ruin, when they are as incapable of “ Restitution by all Human means, as “ dead and dry Bones are of recovering “ their Vital Juice, and being compact- “ ed again into a living Body.” A Subject, fit every way to employ our Thoughts, at a Time, in which we are call'd upon to commemorate a *Revolution*, as surprizing in its Manner, as happy in its Consequences, as full every way of Wonder, and of all the Marks of a Divine Contrivance, as any Age, or Country, (even this Country it self, which hath experienc'd so many and great Vicissitudes) can shew; and which, tho' plac'd in our Annals at some Distance from us, cannot yet be forgotten by us, as long as we feel the Influence, and reap the

S E R M. the Benefits of it ; that is, as long as Regal
vii. Government, and the free Use of Parlia-
~~~~~ments, the Profession of God's pure Reli-  
gion, and the Enjoyment of our Ancient  
Laws and Liberties shall continue among  
us : And, if it can be forgotten with the  
Loss of These only, there is no good  
*Englishman* but will say, May the Me-  
mory of it always flourish !

Give me leave, therefore, to lay be-  
fore you some Thoughts concerning the  
Wisdom of Divine Providence, in inter-  
posing so particularly to bring about these  
mighty unexpected Turns of State ; which  
it doth, doubtless, for many Wise Rea-  
sons known only to that Infinite Mind  
which Steers the Course of such great  
Actions : However, some there are, that  
lie open even to our narrow Apprehen-  
sions. And,

i. The Providence of God concerns it  
self in producing such surprizing Events,  
in order to have its Influence on Things  
below observ'd and acknowledg'd ; which  
would go near to be forgotten, did he  
not,

not, by some remarkable Instances of his S E R M. Interposition in Human Affairs, raise Men up at fit times, into a lively and vigorous Sense of it. Though we know, that we Live, Move, and have our Being in God, that we are supported every Moment by his Power, and conducted in all our Actions by his unerring Wisdom and Goodness; yet the Impression which this Knowledge makes upon our Minds, is but faint, and is quickly effac'd. His Concurring Influences in this Case are so secret, and so difficult to be distinguish'd from the working of Natural and Moral Causes, that we are too apt to rest in the Contemplation of these, without any recourse to those; and to resolve all that happens to us, in Our own Concerns, into the Power of such Principles as lie nearest to us. And, even in the greater and more Publick Transactions of the World, when they go on in such a manner, as to look like the Effects of Human Foresight and Contrivance, we are apt to stop short in our Reflections upon them, without carrying our Thoughts up to

SE R M. that invisible Hand, which wields the  
VII. vast Machine, and directs all its Springs  
<sup>2 Pet. iii.</sup> and Motions, *Since the Fathers fell asleep,*  
4. said the Scoffers in St. Peter, *all things*  
*continue as they were;* and they were  
ready to infer, therefore, that all things  
went on of themselves, without a Superior  
Power to Influence, or Control them.  
But, when the great Scene of Govern-  
ment is shifted all at once, and the Causes,  
that visibly contribute to the Production  
of this Effect, bear no Proportion to it;  
then we look out for others of a more ex-  
tended Force; we perceive a Divine Pro-  
vidence interesting itself in our Affairs,  
and adore the Footsteps of it. When these  
National Judgments, or Mercies of God  
are *abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of*  
*it will learn righteousness.* And that  
Lesson of Divine Wisdom then learnt,  
will be apply'd by them to other Circum-  
stances, and on far different Occasions.  
For, when once a true Principle of Piety,  
and of a Religious Dependence on God, is  
duly excited in us, it will operate beyond  
the particular Cause from whence it  
sprang,

sprang, and give a general Turn and Tendency to all Thoughts and Reflection; as **VII.** One wise Rule of Behaviour, deeply imbib'd, will be useful to us in hundreds of Instances, and spread its Influence throughout the whole Course and Conduct of our Lives and Actions.

Since, therefore, we are so apt to forget God's Administration of the great Affairs below, when they go on evenly and regularly, he is pleas'd, I say, by Awakening Notices, now and then to put us in mind of it; to present to our View some astonishing Revolution of State, like a Glaring Comet, hung up in the Air, whose extraordinary Appearance, and Irregular Motion, shall sooner lead our Thoughts up to the Author of Nature, and imprint a deeper Awe of him upon our Minds, than the Sight of the whole Host of Heaven, in orderly Array continually moving round us.

Indeed, since the Age of Miracles ceas'd, as it did, when the Testimony of the Gospel was fully Seal'd, the chief way, in which God hath been pleas'd to

S E R M. give Extraordinary Indications of his  
vii. Power and Providence, hath been by such  
~~~~ Signs of the Times, such Wonders of  
Government as these; which were not
calculated, like other Miracles, for any
particular Purpose, or Period; but have
been in the World as long as Kingdoms
and Nations have been, and are to last
together with them. And this suggests to
us also, a

2d Reason of God's interposing so
remarkably in the sudden Depressing or
Advancing of Kingdoms and States, be-
cause this conduces to the Manifestation
of his *Political Justice*, or of that Rule
of Acting which he observes, as the
Great Governor and Lord of the World,
towards Publick Bodies and Communi-
ties of Men; and which is very different
from that by which he Punishes the Sins,
or Rewards the Virtues of Private Per-
sons. The Justice of his dealing with
Particular Men may be manifested here,
or hereafter, as he thinks fit; for their
Duration is Eternal: And should their
Success-

Successful Crimes, or Unmerited Afflictions be wink'd at in this World, it suffices, if such Irregularities are set right in another. But, as to Societies, and Combinations of Men, which are of a shorter Date, another Rule must take place; they will at length be lost and swallow'd up in the Kingdom of the Lamb, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, one People under one Lord, and Head, *Christ Jesus*: And, therefore, the Justice of God's Administration, in regard to such Communities, must be manifested either here, or not at all. For which Reason, I say, and that the Manifestation of it may be the more Glorious and Worthy of him, he sometimes turns about the Affairs and Fortunes of States in a very wonderful manner, and makes himself to be known to be the *most High, that ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men.*

^{17.}

And from this Notion of God's Governing, or Political Justice, we may give ourselves some Account why Temporal Felicities and Calamities are so

SER M. often spoken of, and make such a Figure
vii. in the Writings of *Moses*, and the Pro-
phets: For, under that Dispensation,
God's Messengers addressed themselves to
the *Jews* generally, as to a Nation, or
Civil Body of Men; and stirr'd them up
to Virtue, therefore, or dehort'd them
from Vice, by such Motives as were pro-
perly applicable to States and Commu-
nities. Whereas, in the Gospel, we
meet but few Passages, or Instructions of
this kind; the Precepts of it being chiefly
design'd to improve the Morals, and regu-
late the Behaviour of Private Persons, and
to advance their Virtue to a Degree of Per-
fection, answerable in some Measure to
the Gracious Discoveries then first impar-
ted to them. But, as to the Conduct of
Societies, or of particular Members in re-
lation to them, little is said; because the
Doctrine of the Law, and the Prophets,
was so full in that Point, that there was
no need of repeating Lessons, there so often
inculcated, and no room for improving
upon them.

For

For this Reason, among others, may s E R M. we suppose, that the Jews were so remarkable separated from other Nations, and kept so entire within themselves, by the express Commands of God, and by a Fence of many Peculiar Rites and Ceremonies; and that the History of the various and strange Vicissitudes they underwent, from their first Erection into a People, down to their final Excision, is so punctually registered and transmitted to us; that we might in Them, as in the Glass of Providence, (if I may so speak) distinctly see all the several Ways and Methods of God's dealing with great States and Kingdoms, and be fully instructed in the Rules of his raising, or depressing, prospering, or punishing them, by the Interposition of a Divine Power, as Visible almost as the Virtues, or Vices, that occasioned it. But,

3dly, It may afford us a farther Account of those Unexpected Turns of State and Deliverances, which the Arm of God brings to pass, if we consider of

256 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested.*

SERM. what Use they are, to baffle the mista-
vii. ken Policy of Men, and to discover the
~~~~~ Vanity and Emptiness of all those Pre-  
tences to a deep and consummate Wis-  
dom, which the fally-wise of this World  
please themselves in, and value them-  
selves upon.

Men of Ability and Experience in great Affairs, who have been long at the Helm, have hit oft in their Conjectures upon things, and have been very Prosperous in many of their Projects, are apt at last to give themselves the Honour of all their Good Luck, and to grow vain upon it, saying proudly in their Heart, according to the Elegant Expressions of *Isaiab*, *By the strength of my Hand I have done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am prudent; and I have removed the Bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treasure, and I have put down their Inhabitants like a valiant Man. And my Hand hath found, as a Nest, the Riches of the People; and as one gathereth Eggs that are left, have I gathered all the Earth; and there was none that moved the Wing,*

*Isaiab x.  
13, 14.*

or

or opened the Mouth, or peeped. Thus they ~~S E R M.~~ VII.  
adore the goodly Scheme, by which they brought all these things to pass, and reckon upon it as sure and infallible, for the future ; when nevertheless, it hath this one Terrible Defect, that God is left out of it : And therefore, he gives them often a convincing Proof of the Folly of it, by unravelling all their Measures at once, and blasting all their Undertakings, and bringing about a new Scene of Things, through unheeded, unsuspected Methods, which they could not foresee with all their Skill, nor prevent by all their Prudence ; that so *the Wise Man may learn, not to glory in his Wisdom, and the mighty Man not to glory in his Might : but be that glorieth may glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth Me ; that I am the Lord, which exercise loving Kindness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth ; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Were it not for such surprizing Revolutions of Affairs, which disappoint the Devices of these Crafty ones, and makes the Heads of the Ablest and most

Experi-

S E R M. Experienc'd Lookers on, giddy at the  
vii. Sight, God would, in the Opinion of many  
of his Creatures, be shut out from the Go-  
vernment of the World, and the Honour  
of his Conduct would be devolv'd upon  
some of the Mean and Subordinate Instru-  
ments of it; those poor Insects that sit  
upon the Wheels of State, and imagine  
themselves to be the Authors of all its  
Motions, and able to check, or to quicken  
them, at their Pleasure.

There is yet a (*4th*) good Use, to  
which these great National Changes are  
subservient, (those of them, especially,  
which carry a People at once from the  
Extremity of Bad, to the Height of Good  
Fortune; such as That we are now Met  
to Commemorate) and it is this; That  
the Belief of them tends to create and en-  
courage a *National Piety*, and a Publick  
Avow'd Dependence upon God, in the  
greatest Extremities. For, when once Men  
are firmly perswaded, either from the Ex-  
perience of what They themselves have  
felt, or from the Assurance of what hath  
happen'd

happen'd to Others, that no People can s E R M. be reduc'd to such a wretched and forlorn Condition, but that the good Providence of God may, and will, if it sees fit, come in to their Rescue, and deliver them; even without Hope, and against Hope: I say, when this Opinion is once fix'd in Mens Minds, it introduces presently a Publick Face of Religion amongst them, and common Endeavours of expressing their common Trust and Dependence upon God; and it ties them together by the strictest Bands of Fraternal Love, Amity, and Union. Of this the Jews are a very Signal and Instructive Instance, under their several Captivities, and Dispersions; where, tho' they were lost to all human Hopes of Recovery, yet, having an Assurance of the known Favour and Protection of God towards their State, they persisted, in the Strength of it, to wait for, and to expect their Deliverance; and had at those times, such a true Sincere Spirit of Piety stirring amongst them, such Zeal towards God, such Unanimity amongst themselves, as they were utterly Strangers to

SE R M. to, upon Other Occasions: Insomuch that

vii. They, who, when at home, under the free

Enjoyment of their Temple-Worship, were  
prone to all manner of Idolatry; when  
scattered into the Lands of Idols, where  
they had the Temptation ever near them,  
and before their Eyes, are observ'd never  
once to have comply'd with it. And this  
very Principle it is, that still supports and  
animates them, under this their Last and  
Greatest Dispersion, keeps them still ri-  
gidly addicted to their Rites, and closely  
combin'd among themselves, without mix-  
ing with any of the Nations among whom  
they dwell; under the Hopes, that God  
will, yet once more, as he hath often al-  
ready done, make bare his Holy Arm in  
their Behalf, and restore the lost State of  
*Israel*. Nay, even We our selves, who  
are now met to Worship God, were very  
lately an Instance of the Efficacy of such  
Persuasions as these, towards raising up a  
dissolute People into all the Heights of  
an Universal and Undisembled Piety.  
For when, in the Late Hour of Distress  
and Danger, our Constitution in Church  
and

and State was just Sinking under us, and s E R M. the two greatest Evils that belong to VII. Human Nature, the Oppression of our Liberties, and of our Consciences, were ready to overtake us, and no Human Help, that we could then see, was near; how yet did our Belief of the Over-ru-ling Power of God sustain us with the Hopes that he would, in some Way, or other, own our Cause, support our sink-ing State, and work our Salvation for us? And how were we wrought upon by this Confidence, to turn to him with the ut-most Unanimity and Earnestness? What Zeal did we then express for the Pure Religion of *Christ*? What Reverence to-wards his Priests? What Love towards one another? What good Resolutions did we take up? What Solemn Vows did we make of living answerably to Our Holy Profession? and, I believe, sincerely meant (tho' by our Behaviour since, one would scarce think, we meant) to perform them? How were our Churches then fill'd with Crowds of Worshippers? Our Altars fur-rounded by unusual Numbers of Devout Com-

S E R M. Communicants? How were all Ranks  
VII. and Conditions of Men Then remarkable  
for their Piety and Seriousness; as re-  
markable as they are now for their In-  
difference and Prophaneness? Doubtless,  
the Addresses, we then made to God for  
Relief, were actuated and enliven'd by a  
Reflection on the Surprizing Blessings of  
this Day; and we were encouraged to  
hope that God, who had once before  
wonderfully restor'd our Constitution,  
even when it was lost, would be prevail'd  
with also, by a timely Application, to  
preserve it from Ruin. And methinks,  
therefore, our Latter Deliverance should  
not make the Former forgot; when the  
One of these was the Foundation of our  
asking, and obtaining the Other. How  
know we, what Need we may Yet have  
of retreating to such Considerations, and  
fortifying ourselves with a Reflection on  
such Encouraging Precedents as these?  
And we do well, therefore, to cherish the  
Memory of them.

That we may do so, give me leave, in  
compliance with the Design of this Day  
and

and this Assembly, briefly to set before S E R M. you, First, The Greatness and Extent of <sup>vii.</sup>  that Publick Blessing for which we think ourselves oblig'd so long afterwards to pay our Publick Thanks; and then (what my Text more particularly directs me to) the Extraordinary and Surprizing manner in which it was convey'd to us.

The Blessing was of itself Vast and Comprehensive; for it took in all that was valuable and dear to us, either on a Religious, or Civil Account; and resettle<sup>d</sup> a ruined Church and Kingdom on that Firm Basis, on which they stood, till violent and wicked Hands remov'd them; and on which may they stand for Ever! 'Tis natural for Men to think that Government the best, under which they drew their first Breath, and to propose it as a Model and Standard for all Others. But, if any People upon Earth have a just Title thus to boast, 'tis We of this Island; who enjoy a Constitution, wisely moulded, out of all the different Forms and Kinds of Civil Government, into such an Excellent and Happy Frame, as contains in

see in it all the Advantages of those several  
Forms, without sharing deeply in any of  
their Great Inconveniences. A Constitu-  
tion, nicely poiz'd betwecn the Ex-  
tremes of too much Liberty, and too  
much Power; the several Parts of it ha-  
ving a proper Check upon each other:  
By the means of which they are all re-  
strain'd, or soon reduced, within their  
due Bounds: And yet the peculiar Powers,  
with which Each is separately invested,  
are sure always, in Dangerous Conjur-  
tures, to give way to the Common  
Good of the Whole. A Constitution,  
where the Prince is cloath'd with a Pre-  
rogative, that enables him to do all the  
Good he hath a mind to; and wants no  
Degree of Authority, but what a Good  
Prince would not, and an Ill one ought  
not to have: Where he governs, tho' not  
Absolutely, yet Gloriously, because he go-  
verns Men, and not Slaves; and is obey'd  
by them chearfully, because they know  
that, in obeying Him, they obey those  
Laws only which they themselves had  
a Share in contriving. A Constitution,  
where

where the External Government of the S F R M. Church is so closely interwoven with that of the State, and so exactly adapted to it, in all its Parts, as that it can flourish only, when That flourishes ; and must, as it hath always hitherto done, decline, die, and revive with it. In a word, where the Interest of Prince and Subject, Priest and People, are perpetually the same ; and the only fatal Mistake, that ever happens in our Politicks, is, when they are thought to be divided.

It is objected indeed to this Admirable Model, that it is liable to frequent Struggles and Concussions within, from the several Interfering Parts of it : But this, which is reckon'd the Disease of our Constitution, may rather be thought a Mark of its Soundness, and the chief Security of its Continuance. For 'tis with Governments exactly contriv'd, as with Bodies of a nice Frame and Texture ; where, the Humours being evenly mix'd, every little Change of the Proportion introduces a Disorder, and raises that Ferment which is necessary to bring all right

S again

S E R M. again ; and which thus preserves the  
vii. Health of the Whole, by giving early No-  
tice of whatever is noxious to any of the  
Parts : Whereas in Governments, as well  
as Bodies of a coarser Make, the Disease  
doth often not begin to shew itself, till  
it hath infected the whole Mass, and is  
past a Cure ; and so, tho' they are disor-  
der'd later, yet they are destroy'd much  
sooner. Accordingly we know that, un-  
der this Disadvantage, if it be one, our  
Constitution hath now lasted pretty Entire  
through many Ages : For, excepting the  
short Interruptions which *Conquest* gave,  
(which, however, have not been either  
so Many, or so Great, as some would  
make them) it hath continu'd much the  
same, in the main Parts and Branches of  
it, from the Earliest Times of our *Saxon*  
Ancestors, down to these Days. A clear  
Proof, that it is a Government suited every  
way to our Temper, and to our Clime ;  
that it is perfectly made for Us, and We  
for It : And that God, therefore, never  
punishes us more sorely, than when he  
deprives us of it for a time ; nor ever con-  
fers

fers a great Blessing upon us, than when S E R M.  
he restores it----

VII.

As he did on this happy Day; when, after the Confusions of a Long Civil War, attended with the Destruction of an Excellent Church, the Murther of a Gracious Prince, and the Grievous Tyranny of our Fellow Subjects, he was pleas'd at length to give us back again, what we had so lightly departed from, our Old *English* Government and Laws; and, together with them, what we before boasted of in Name only, the True Liberty of the Subject, and the real Freedom and Honour of Parliaments. And to this Day, therefore, we owe all the Benefits we have since reap'd from the Regal Administration, all the Peace, Plenty, and Happiness, we have enjoy'd, or our Posterity after us shall enjoy, under it.

To the Influence of this Day it is owing, that we have now at the Head of our Troops, and our Councils, a Prince, who hath happily join'd together the Extremes of Martial and Political Virtues; and

S E R M. knows as well how to Govern a Free  
vii. People by their own Laws and Customs,  
as to Command Legions: Who, whether  
in the Cabinet, or in the Field, is still  
equally in his Sphere; and is always indif-  
ferent, therefore, either to War, or Peace,  
any farther than the One, or the Other,  
shall conduce to the Good of his People,  
and the General Interest of Mankind.

Nay, to this Day it is owing, That  
that Great Assembly before which I stand,  
are, under the Auspicious Conduct of  
our Prince, Arbiters of the Fate, and Go-  
vernors of the Balance of *Europe*: That  
their Resolves have as wide an Influence,  
as the Firmest Leagues and Confederacies;  
and their very Counsels are more For-  
midable than the Hostile Preparations of  
Others: So that They, who lately felt  
the Weight of the *English* Arms, will  
be afraid of entering upon such Measures  
as may awaken Your Resolution of once  
again taking them up; saying within  
themselves, according to the Expressions

Gen. xliz. of the Enlighten'd Patriarch; *Judah is  
a Lion's Whelp, he hath gone up from  
the*

*the Prey, He Stooped down, he Couched s E R M.  
as a Lion, and as an Old Lion; Who VII.  
shall rouze him up?* 

The Blessing, therefore, we Commemorate, was Great; and it was made yet greater by the Way in which God was pleas'd to convey it to us: For he did it in such a Manner, as to shew, that He was the Sole Author of it, and that it sprang not from Human Wit, or Contrivance. He did it, after our Forefathers were reduced to Extremities, and had tired themselves by Various Attempts to bring this great End about, and had been baffled in all of them, and sat down at last in despair of effecting it. Then was it time for him to appear for our Redemption, and to give Himself the Glory of it. All was Darkness about them, without Form, and void; when the Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of this Abyss, and said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light:* And both God and Man *saw that this Light was Good;* the One, rejoicing in his Own Gift; and the Other, blessing and magnifying the Bestower of it. "Tis

S E R M. true, the Reasoners of this World, who  
vii. love to solve every Event, without any

Recourse to a Divine Power, will be ready to point out several Causes, which help'd forward this End, and smooth'd the way towards it. But though there were many such, yet it must be own'd, that All of them put together were not of Force enough to produce the Effect; nor, particularly, to account for that Universal Bent and Inclination of the People of all Ranks, Interests and Opinions, which, upon the first Opening of this wonderful Scene, at once discover'd itself; and which could proceed from Him alone, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, and turneth them whithersoever he listeth.

Alas! When Man is to influence Man, in order to bring about such Mighty Changes as these, the Work goes on but slowly. 'Tis hard to Unite in any Common Measures all the several little Sects and Parties, into which a Nation is crumbled; their Interfering Interests, Passions, and Prejudices will obstruct the best-

best-laid Design: What it gains in one s E R M. Place, it will lose in another; and never, VII. but by the Intervention of a Superior Power, succeed Universally. But when God once comes into such a Work, it ripens apace; all Obstructions presently cease, all Difficulties vanish. As the Tops of Corn bend this way, or that, before the Wind; so are the various Minds of the Multitude fway'd and inclin'd by the Inward Breathings of his Spirit.

It is worth observing, therefore in the Vision of *Ezekiel*, from whence my Text is drawn, how, even after *the Sinews and the Flesh were come up upon the Dry Bones, and the Skin had covered them above*, yet still it is said, that *there was no Breath in them*; and still therefore the Prophet is commanded to *prophecy to the four Winds, and to bid them breathe upon those slain, that they might live*: And then, and not till then it was, that *the Breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army*. The Meaning of which is, that in every sudden Revo-

S E R M. vii. lutions of State, though there be many visible Dispositions and Causes, that concur to favour it, yet still the last Finishing Turn is always from God; who animates and invigorates the whole Design, puts all its Parts at once into Motion, and removes all Impediments.

Thus he effected the Deliverance of this Day; by opening at once the Eyes of a Deluded People, shewing them their True Interest, and inspiring them with Unanimity and Zeal to pursue it; and in order to it, allaying their Mutual Heats, lessening their Prejudices, and softning their Aversions. *The Wolf he made to dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard to lie down with the Kid;* that is, the most Opposite Tempers were brought to conspire peaceably in this Great Event, the most Divided Interests were reconciled in it: And even They, who were prepar'd to Prophecy against it, were yet, by an Over-ruling Influence, determin'd to pronounce a Blessing; and forc'd, as they look'd on, to take up their Parable, and say, *God batb*

bath not bebeled Iniquity in Jacob, nei- & E.R.M.  
ther bath be seen Perverseness in Israel; VII.  
the Lord his God is with him, and <sup>Numb.</sup>  
the shout of a King is among them. xxiii. 21,  
God bath brought them out of Egypt; <sup>22, 23.</sup>  
be bath, as it were, the strength of an  
Unicorn. Surely, there is no Incant-  
ment against Jacob, neither is there  
any Divination against Israel: Accord-  
ing to this time it shall be said of Ja-  
cob, and of Israel, What bath God  
wrought?

Since the Work, therefore, was His,  
let us give Him the Praise of it! Even as  
we do, by this Solemn Appearance: fal-  
ling low on our Knees before his Footstool,  
and saying, *Not unto Us, O Lord, not unto Us,* Ps. cxv. 1.  
*nor unto our Forefathers, but unto*  
*Tby Name give Glory; for thy Mercy*  
*and for thy Truth's Sake!* For thy Mer-  
cy's Sake, which induc'd thee to give so  
happy a Turn to the Affairs of so Un-  
deserving a People; and for thy Truth's  
Sake, which thou intendest to secure and  
to re-establish by the Means of it.

SER.M. Let us piously ascribe this, and all  
 VII. other our Deliverances to God, and all  
 ~~~ our Calamities to our Selves; acknowledg-  
 ing the One to be as properly the
 Consequence of our Sins, as the Other is
 the Result of his Unmerited Favour and
 Goodness. And let us from such sur-
 prizing Events as these, which have con-
 fessedly something Divine in them, learn
 to lift up our Thoughts above Material
 Causes, and to instruct ourselves in all
 the Amazing Lessons of God's Governing
 Providence; by which he holds the Ba-
 lance of Nations, and inclines it which
 Dan. iv. way he pleases; so that *all the Inhabi-*
 35. *tants of the Earth are reputed as nothing*
to him, and he doth according to his
Will in the Army of Heaven, and among
the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none
can stay his Hand, or say unto him,
What doest thou?

And this he now performs by the Ad-
 ministration of the Man *Christ Jesus*;
 to whom, immediately upon his Resur-
 rection, he gave all Power, in Heaven,
 and in Earth; and whom, upon his

Ascent into Heaven, (the Holy Subjects s E R M.
also of this Day's Solemnity) he instated in VII.
the full Possession and Exercise of that 
Power; declaring him King of Kings, and
Lord of Lords. And, indeed, *Worthy is Rev. v.*
the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power,^{12, 13.}
and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength,
and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.
Therefore, *Blessing and Honour, and*
Glory and Power, be unto him that setteth
upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for
ever and ever!

*The Duty of Publick Intercession and
Thanksgiving for Princes.*

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the Honourable
H O U S E o f C O M M O N S

A T

St. Margaret's, Westminster,

On Wednesday, March 8, 1704.

Being the Day of her MAJESTY's Happy
Accession to the THRONE.

I TIM. ii. 1, 2, 3.

*I Exhort, That, first of all, Supplications,
Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of
Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings,
and all that are in Authority; that we
may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life,
in all Godliness and Honesty: For this is
Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God,
our Saviour.*

TH E R E was nothing by which the **S E R M.**
Enemies of Christianity endeav- **viii.**
our'd, and hop'd so much to retard the **~~~**
Pro-

S E R M. Progress of it, as by representing to
viii. Princes and Rulers, that the Propagation
of this Doctrine tended to subvert their
Government; that the Spreaders of it,
where-ever they came, *exceedingly trou-
bled Cities*, and *turned the World upside
down*. It behov'd the Apostles, therefore,
to guard against this Objection with all
imaginable Care. As they knew, that
the great Work, in which they were em-
ploy'd, was not, as yet, to be promoted,
or countenanc'd by the Powers of this
World; so they resolv'd to give them no
just Ground, or Colour to obstruct it: and
wisely, therefore, took all Occasions to
declare their Abhorrence of such as *de-
spised Dominion, and spake Evil of Digni-
ties*; frequently press'd upon their new
Converts the Duties of paying *Honour*,
and *Fear*; and *Tribute* to the *Higher
Powers*; [as being the *Ordinance of God*]
and of *submitting themselves* to them,
*not only for Wrath, but also for Con-
science sake*. And, for this Reason, it
may be presum'd that St. Paul introduceth
his Instructions to *Timothy*, the new Bi-
shop

shop of *Ephesus*, by *Exhorting him*, that, S E R M. in order to a due Discharge of his high VIII. Trust, he should *first of all*, or, above all things, take care, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men*; especially for Kings, and all that are in Authority; that we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and Honesty: For this, says he, is Good, and Acceptable in the Sight of God, our Saviour.

The Exhortation hath a double Aspect, on Mankind in general, and on Princes and Rulers in particular. I shall consider it, with regard to the Latter of these only, for whose Sake the Apostle seems chiefly to have made it; and under this View, it suggests to us Three Heads of Discourse, very proper to be handled on this Day, and in this Assembly.

I. It recommends a great Duty to us, the I. Duty of *making Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, and of giving Thanks, for Kings, and all that are in Authority.*

II. It

SERM.

VIII. II. It expresses the general Reason, and
 ~~~~~ Ground of that Duty: *For this is Good*  
 II. *and Acceptable in the Sight of God, our*  
*Saviour.*

III. III. It quickens us to the Exercise of it  
 by a special Motive, drawn from the Con-  
 sideration of our own Ease, Advantage,  
 and Happiness; *That we may lead a Quiet*  
*and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and*  
*Honesty.*

These Points I shall first consider, and  
 explain, in that Latitude, with which  
 the Apostle hath propos'd them; and  
 then adapt the general Argument to the  
 particular Occasion of this Day's joyful  
 Solemnity.

I. The Writers on this Place have distin-  
 guish'd with some Exactness between *Su-  
 plications, Prayers, and Intercessions,* and  
 endeavour'd to give us the strict and pro-  
 per Sense of each of these Words; which,  
 I think, it is neither necessary, nor easy  
 to

to determine. Sure we are, that by All s E R M. these together the Apostle intended to express the Petitionary Part of our Devotions; and by giving of Thanks, the other Part, which consists of Hymns and Praises. These two comprise the whole of our Religious Service; and in both these ways we are exhorted to address ourselves to God, for Kings, and all that are in Authority, i. e. for the Supreme Magistrate, and all Inferior and Subordinate Governors.

Ancient and Modern Interpreters agree to understand this Passage of the Publick Offices, or Devotions of the Church: and, indeed, the Episcopal Character of *Timothy*, to whom the Exhortation is address'd; the Instructions which immediately follow, and manifestly relate to the same Head of Publick Worship; and the profess'd Design of St. Paul in writing this Epistle, which was, to instruct *Timothy*, *How he ought to behave himself*, Tlm. iii. in the House of God; do, I think, naturally and necessarily determine us so to understand it: Especially, if we consider,

VOL. I. T that,

S E R M. that the Exhortation, thus understood,  
viii. was agreeable to the Practice of the  
Jewish Church; the Pattern, which, in  
Matters of Worship, Discipline, and Go-  
vernment, the Apostles chiefly follow'd:  
And, accordingly, we find the Earliest  
Apologist for Christianity representing it  
as the Constant and known Usage of the  
First Christians, in all their Sacred Assem-  
blies, to Pray for the Lives of their Em-  
perors, and for the Prosperity of their State  
and Government.

Our Church is in this, as in other Re-  
spects, truly Primitive; for thus we pray  
daily in her Liturgy. And what we do  
every Day, we may, at some times, be  
allow'd to perform more devoutly and  
solemnly; even as often as the Course of  
the Year shall bring on that Happy Day,  
when her Majesty first began to Reign  
on the Throne of her Ancestors, and in  
the Hearts of her Subjects, and to refresh  
this Church, and State, with the kind In-  
fluences of her Mild and Gracious Admi-  
nistration. Whenever this Annual Season  
of Joy returns, a lively and affecting Sense  
of

of the Mercies it convey'd to us, cannot ~~s E R M.~~  
but return with it: which we have no ~~VIII.~~  
better way of expressing, than by Offer-  
ing up to God, (as now we do, and  
are by St. Paul exhorted to do) our De-  
voutest Thanks for the Blessings we al-  
ready feel, and our most earnest Prayers for  
the Continuance and Increase of them.

The Reason and Ground of which Duty  
is thus, in the

Second Place, expressed: *For this is II.*  
*Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God,*  
*our Saviour.* It is *Good*, i. e. highly  
Decent, Expedient, and Reasonable in  
itself; and, therefore, *Acceptable in the*  
*Sight of God our Saviour*; a Performance  
particularly well pleasing to Him, by  
whom Kings Reign, of whose Power  
they partake, and whose *Image and Su-*  
*perscription* they bear. Let us take a di-  
stinct View of the several Springs, from  
whence our Obligation to this Duty may  
be suppos'd to arise. And,

S E R M. I<sup>st</sup>, Our Applications to God in be-  
viii. half of the Princes and Rulers of this  
~~~ World are highly reasonable, as they are  
Proper Expressions of our Good-Will to
Mankind, whose Fate is in their Hands,
and whose Welfare in great measure de-
pends upon their Actions and Conduct.
Sovereign Princes and States, are the
Chief Instruments, which the Providence
of God employs, in his Administrations
here below, and by which he brings
about all those Mighty Events, that fix,
or unsettle the Peace of the World.
When these great Wheels move irregu-
larly, the whole Machine of State is pre-
sently render'd unserviceable, and num-
berless depending Motions are either stopp'd,
or disorder'd.

The Execution of all Laws is entrusted
with Them ; and Laws are the Source
of every Advantage that redounds to
Mankind from Society, which, without
them, would not be preferable to Soli-
tude. To the Influence of These it is
owing, that we can call any Thing our
Own, even Life itself ; and are shelter'd

from the Attacks, which the Lusts and s E R M. Passions of Men, not restrain'd by the VIII. Principles of Reason and Religion, would *~~~* be every Day making upon us; That we are polish'd in our Manners, and bred up in all the Arts of Civil Life, which can render us Useful, or Agreeable to each other: and, chiefly, that we have Opportunities of thus appearing before God, and praising him in the Great Congregation; of hearing his Everlasting Gospel expounded to us, and being directed in all those Paths of Piety and Virtue, which lead to Peace in this World, and to Everlasting Life in the next.

" Of Law (said the excellent *Mr. Hooker* long since, with a Compass of Thought, and a Force of Words peculiar to him; Of Law) " no less can be ac-
" knowledg'd, than that her Seat is in
" the Bosom of God; her Voice, the
" Harmony of the World; that all things
" in Heaven, and Earth, do her Homage;
" the very Least, as feeling her Care,
" and the Greatest, as not exempt from
" her Power; both Angels, and Men,

T 3 " and

S E R M. " and Creatures, of what kind soever,
viii. " though Each, in different Sort and
~~~~ " Manner, yet All, with one Uniform  
" Consent, admiring her as the Mother  
" of their Peace and Joy." He, therefore,  
upon whose Authority, and Will,  
the Observation of Human Laws depends,  
hath the Happiness, or Misery of Man-  
PGL. lxxv. kind in his Power; *the Earth, and all the*  
<sup>3.</sup> *Inhabitants thereof, would be dissolved,*  
*did not such Persons bear up the Pillars*  
*of it.*

Nay, even the Example of Princes, is, itself, a Living Law to their Subjects, which fashions them by Degrees into a Likeness of Manners, and spreads its Influence insensibly, but powerfully, thro' Cities, and Kingdoms.

So that, to make Supplications for Kings, that their Government may be Wise, Just, and Prosperous, is, to pray at once for all the Temporal Felicities which can accrue to us; a good Reign being the most Universal and Comprehensive Blessing, which either Man can ask, or God bestow; and for which we have

have as much Reason to be Thankful as ~~S E R M.~~  
for the Light of the Sun, for Temperate ~~VIII.~~  
Weather, and Fruitful Seasons.

Even an Ill Prince cannot help doing a great deal of Good, by preserving some Degree of Order and Government in the World; and, therefore, even Such an One hath a Title to our Prayers, and Thanksgivings. But, when Virtue ascends the Throne, it dispenses Blessings without Number, and without Measure; and spreads its Influence on all around, and beneath it: *Its going forth* ~~full xx.~~  
*is from the End of a Kingdom, and* <sup>6.</sup> *its Circuit to the Ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.*  
*Happy are the People that are in such a Case;* They have great Reason to Bless, who are thus Blessed of the Lord. But,

*2dly,* As the Virtues and Vices of those who Govern, operate on all Inferior Ranks of Men, in the way of Natural Causes, so have they another, and a more Extraordinary Effect; inasmuch as God doth often take Occasion to Reward

S E R M. or Punish a People, not only by the  
viii. Means of Good, or Ill Princes, but even  
~~~~~ for the Sake of them. Plain Instances of  
this kind we have recorded in Scripture ;
particularly, where Subjects have suffer'd
for the Iniquities of those who were set
over them, and the Vengeance, Merited
by the One, hath been Inflicted, and, as
it were, Transferred on the Other.
Whether it be, that the good, or ill Con-
duct of Rulers is sometimes Owing to
their People, and may therefore justly be
Imputed to them ; or whether (as in the
Case of Visiting the Sins of Parents on
their Children) by making them mu-
tually liable to the Consequences of
each Other's Actions, God intends to
imprint a mutual Concern and Endeav-
our for each Other's Welfare, and to
Unite them together in the strictest Bands
of Interest, and Affection : Whatever
the Reason of God's dealing in this
manner with Princes and States may be,
sure we are, that he doth thus deal with
them, and that this is one Chief Article
in that Scheme of Political Justice, by
which

which he governs the World. And SERM. can there be a better Argument for our Interceding with God in the behalf of Kings, and all that are in Authority, than This, That we are really at such times interceding for ourselves? Since We may be chastised for Their Transgressions, and reap the Rewards of Their Piety and Goodness? Further,

3dly, The Cares of Empire are great, and the Burthen, which lies upon the Shoulders of Princes, very weighty; and, on This Account, therefore, they Challenge, because they particularly want, our Prayers, that they may have an Understanding Heart, to discern between Good and Bad, and to go out and in before a great People. With what Difficulties is their Administration often clog'd by the Perverseness, Folly, or Wickedness of those they govern? How hard a thing do they find it, to inform themselves truly of the State of Affairs; where Fraud and Flattery surround, and take such Pains to mislead them? How Nice a Task is it, to distinguish between the Extremes of allowing

S E R M. lowing too much Liberty, and affecting
viii. too much Power? To what Daily Dan-
~gers are their Persons exposed, from the
Attempts of Treachery, and Violence? How
particular and pressing are the Temptations,
to which the Height of Power, they have attain'd makes them
liable? They are above the Reach of Fear,
Reproof, and most of those Out-
ward Checks, which God has plac'd, as
Guards upon private Mens Virtue; and
are, on that Account, in great Danger of
letting loose their Appetites and Passions
in all manner of Excesses, without an
Extraordinary Degree of God's Restraining
Grace; which, therefore, it becomes,
and concerns us to beg of Him, and for
Them.

Christian Charity and Beneficence is a
Debt which we owe to our Kings, as well
as to the Meanest of their Subjects. But
how shall we extend our Good Offices to
Those, who move in so high a Sphere?
how, but by applying ourselves to One,
that is yet higher than They, even our
Common Lord and Master; and humbly
implore

implore the Aids of his good Spirit, to ~~s E R M.~~ Comfort, Support, and Guide them? ~~VIII.~~ ~~~~~~~~~
This is the only Compensation, or Re-
turn, which most of us are capable of
making to them, for their Vigilance and
Concern for the Publick Safety, the Pains
which they take, and the Hazards which
they run to secure it.

And, to encourage our Requests in their
behalf, we may consider, in the

4th, Place, That the Providence of God
doth, in a very Particular Manner, inter-
pose towards swaying the Wills and Affec-
tions, directing, or over-ruling the In-
tentions of those who sit at the Helm:
for the King's Heart is in the Hand of God, as the Rivers of Waters; He turneth it whithersoever he listeth: ^{Prov. xxi.} He gives
a Bent to it, this way, or that; which it
takes as certainly, and easily as a Stream
is deriv'd into the Channels, which the
Hand of the Workman prepares for it.
On this Foundation our Church professes
to build the Duty, and the Expediency of
praying for Princes: *We are taught (says She) by the Holy Word, that the Hearts*

SER.M. of Kings are in thy Rule and Government, and that thou doft dispose and turn them, as it seemeth best to thy godly Wifdom. Indeed, the Spirit of God operates on the Spirits of all Men ; but not in so Copious, so Powerful, and Extraordinary a manner, as it doth on the Spirits of Princes, which God delighteth to restrain, and, by that means, to shew himself Wonderful among the Kings of the Earth. It is the chief Care, the peculiar Province, the great Prerogative of the King of Kings, to rule the Thoughts of Those, who rule the Actions of Others ; and thereby to bring about the Ends, the mysterious and inscrutable Ends, of his Providence. And, 'tis well for Mankind that there is a Being, who hath, and exerciseth such a Power ; for unless there were, Human Power, left to itself, would make wild work in the World ; the Chariot of Government would be often, and dangerously misguided by Rash Unskilful Drivers, did not an Invisible Hand hold the Reins, and gently direct the Course of it.

The

The Scripture seems to intimate, that S E R M. God hath appointed Tutelar Angels, to VIII. act under him, for this Purpose; at least, that such Ministering Spirits there were, before the Erection of the Mediatorial Kingdom of our Saviour: For, in *Daniel*, we read of Particular Princes, or Patrons, assign'd, from the Angelic Host, to the *Grecians*, and *Perfians*; in order, as is piously believ'd to Encourage, Enlighten and Protect the Governors of those Estates and Empires. We are interested more nearly in the Welfare and good Conduct of Princes than those Ministering Spirits are; shall we not have some share in procuring it? Ought we not with our utmost Zeal to assist Those, whom God, for our sakes, vouchsafes in so Eminent a Manner to direct, and assist? And, what better way of assisting them have we, than by our *Supplications* and *Thanksgivings*? Which, let me add, in the

. Last Place, are never, on this Occasion, so becomingly and forcibly address'd to God, as in the great Congregation. Blessings of a publick Nature and Influence

SER M. ence require as Publick and Solemn Ac-
viii. knowledgments; and the proper Way of
~~~~~ obtaining Mercies, which affect Many, is,  
by pouring out the Joint-Requests of Many  
in behalf of them: For in the Spiritual,  
as well as the Carnal Warfare, Numbers  
are most likely to prevail. The Ancients,  
therefore represent the Strength of such  
United Devotions by that of an Army,  
encompassing, besieging God; not to be  
*Tribulation.* defeated, or resisted by him. *Coimus ad*  
*Deum* (saith one of them) *ut, quash Manu*  
*facta, Precationibus eum ambiamus; bæc*  
*Vis Deo grata est:* " We come toge-  
ther in Troops, as it were, and sur-  
round God with our Prayers; this  
Violence of ours is well-pleasing to  
him." We then Ask, and we Then  
give Thanks, with the greatest Alacrity  
and Earnestness, and, consequently, with  
the surest Hope of Acceptance, and  
Success, when we excite and warm each  
other into this Holy Performance; and,  
with One Heart, and One Mouth, utter  
the Awakening Words which the Devout  
Psalmist us'd, at a Solemnity like This,  
which

which we are now met to celebrate : *This is the Day which the Lord hath made ; let us be glad, and rejoice in it. Help now, O Lord ; O Lord, send us now Prosperity. God is the Lord, who hath shewed us Light : Bind the Sacrifice with Cords, yea, even to the Horns of the Altar.*

I have explain'd the Grounds and Reasons of the Duty, intimated to us in those Words of the Text : *For this is Good, and Acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour.* I proceed to consider the special Motive there propos'd, to quicken us into the Exercise of it : *That so we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.* I shall briefly shew, in what Respects the Devotions recommended by the Apostle contribute to this End ; and how far, therefore, our Own Ease, Advantage, and Happiness is concerned in paying them. And

*1st,* They have a plain Tendency this way, as they are a prevailing Argument with God so to dispose and incline the Minds of Princes, that they may study to

S E R M. to promote the Quiet, Good and Prospe-  
viii. rity of their Kingdoms. If we believe  
our Prayers to have any Effect, we cannot  
doubt their Usefulness in this Particular ;  
which is too evident to need a farther En-  
largement.

2dly, Such Prayers facilitate our *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godli- ness and Honesty*; inasmuch as they express, in the most significant manner, our Love, and Zeal, and Reverence towards the Persons of Princes : and by such Instances of Duty invite them to make us suitable Returns. They effectually prevent those Jealousies, which Men clothed with Sovereign Power are too apt to entertain of their Inferiors ; and promote that good Understanding between them, which is the Common Interest, and should be the Common Aim of Both ; and wherein the Security, and Happiness of all well-order'd States chiefly consists. The Holy Wishes and Vows we make for Their Welfare will engage their unwearied Endeavours for Ours ; and the Thanksgivings put up by us for the

the Tranquillity, we enjoy under their S E R M. Reign, will move them to afford us fresh VIII. and frequent Occasions for New ones.

Particularly, the Church is in This way best capable of giving Aid and Assistance to the State; and by that means, of deserving, and securing its Protection and Favour. This is the Spiritual *Tribute* and *Custom*, which she pays to the Supreme Magistrate; and for which she receives, in Exchange, all the Temporal Blessings and Encouragement, that flow from the Munificence of Princes, and make her not only to Subsist, but Flourish.

3dly, *A Quiet and Peaceable Life* is the Fruit of these Publick Devotions; as We ourselves derive from thence a Spirit of Meekness, Submission, and Respect to our Superiors, and are led into an Habitual Love and Practice of those Mild Graces and Virtues, which we, at such times, solemnly exercise, and pray God to inspire us with; and which, when generally practis'd, make Crowns fit easy on the Heads of Princes, and render Them,

ster M. and their Subjects, equally a Blessing to  
 VIII. Each Other. Such as sincerely pray for  
 ~~~ the Prosperity of a State, are not likely to  
 disturb it themselves, or to push on others
 into Attempts against the Peace of it:
 They come out of the Church, still more
 Devoted to their Prince, and Country,
 than they went in; more Zealous, and
 better Qualify'd to discharge their Duty to
 the Publick, in their several Places and
 Stations.

IV. I have sufficienly explain'd the Exhortation of St. Paul, and the General Arguments, and Motives, by which he enforceth it. The best way of closing, and applying these Reflections will be, to take a View of the Character of those Princes, on whose behalf the Apostle preareth on the Christians of his Time the Practice of this Duty, and from thence to shew, how much stronger Obligations We are under of complying with it. And

Eph. ii.
 12. *1st*, The Princes, for whom the Apostle pleads, were Infidels, *without Christ, Aliens*

*Aliens from his Commonwealth, and SERM.
Strangers from the Covenants of his VIII.
Promise; and such also they were, by the
the Permission of God, to coatinue for
Three Hundred Years after the Coming
of our Saviour; that so his Gospel might
not owe its first Establishment, in any
Degree to the Secular Powers; but might
spread and fix itself every where, without
their Help, and against their Will; and
manifest to all the World its Divine Ori-
ginal, by the Miraculous Manner in which
it should be propagated. The Kings of
the Earth were not, during this Period,
to promote the Belief of the Gospel, any
otherwise than by Opposing it. When
the rest of the World had come in, and
own'd our Saviour, Then, and not till
Then, were the Rulers of it to submit
their Scepters to the Scepter of Christ, to
Embrace, Protect, and Encourage his
Doctrine, but not to Plant it; that, in
This Sense also, the Prediction of our
Lord concerning the Progress of his King-
dom, and the Call of Believers, migh-*

S E R M. be verify'd, that *the Last of Men should be VIII. First; and the First, Last.*

Mat. xx. 16. If then, the Tribute of *Supplications and Thanksgivings* was due to those Heathen Princes, it is not much more due to those who are Christians? Who are ingrafted, as Principal Members, into that Mystical Body, of which *Christ Jesus* is the Head? Who, under him, are the Chief Governors of his Church here below, and Guardians of all her Sacred Rights and Privileges? They beseech, and they praise God together with Us, in the same Common Assemblies; and we are, therefore, doubly obliged to beseech, and to praise God for them. It may be observ'd, in the

2d Place, That the *Roman Emperors*, for whom the Apostle here directs that Prayers should be made, were Usurpers and Tyrants; who acquired Dominion by invading the Liberties of a Free People, and were Arbitrary and Lawless in the Exercise of it. Their Will and Pleasure was the sole Standard of Justice; Fear was the Foundation of their Government,

vernment, and their Throne was upheld S E R M.
only by the Legions which surrounded VIII.


Even for such Rulers the first Christians were exhorted to Supplicate and give Thanks. How much more reasonably and chearfully do We, who are met here this Day, now offer up that Sacrifice for a *Queen*, who wears the Crown of her Forefathers, to which She is entitled by Blood, and which was placed on her Royal Head, not only with the Free Consent, but with the Universal Joy and Acclamations of her Subjects? Who rules a willing People, not by the Terror of Rods and Axes, but with the indulgent Tenderness of a Common Parent? Who desires rather to be Belov'd, than Fear'd by them, and takes the truest way toward securing their Utmost Love, by shewing, in every Step of Her Gracious Conduct, that She entirely loves them? Who hath no Interest, can have no Interest, separate from Theirs; and upon whom Malice itself could never fasten a Suspicion of her pursuing any

SER M. Measures, which aim'd rather at Her Own,
 VIII. Glory, or Advantage, than the Common
 Good of *England*?

The Law is as much a Rule to Her, as to the least of Those who obey her; the fixt Measure, not only of Her governing Power, but even of Her Will to govern; and She makes no other Use of that Power, with which the Laws have invested Her, than to give Life and Force to them.

The Blessings of Her Mild and Merciful Government descend from the Throne upon Her People, *as the Small Rain cometh down into a Fleece of Wool*, without Vehemence, or Noise; *like the Drops of Rain, that water the Earth*, gently, and insensibly. She draws up the Free Offering of our Love, and Duty, only to return them back again in Showers of Royal Bounty; which make glad the Land, and produce a mighty Increase.

Surely, our Lips cannot be better employ'd, than in Praising God for such mighty Benefits, as these, and for the
 Blessed

Blessed Hand, through which he conveys s E R M.
them !

VIII.

*T*hirdly, Those who govern'd the  World, at, or near the Time of St. Paul's writing this Epistle, had no Personal Merits or Virtues to recommend them to the Prayers of the Faithful. *Tiberius*, *Caligula* *Claudius*, and *Nero*, under whom the Christian Faith was disseminated, and for all whom we may presume, the Faithful equally made their Supplications, were not only Bad Princes, but Bad Men ; infamous for their Lust, Cruelty, and other Vices : But they were in Authority, and that gave them a Right to be mention'd in the Sacred Offices of the Church.

How different from Their Case is Ours, whose Eyes behold on the Throne a Queen, who deserves to sit there, as well by Her Virtue, as by Her Birth ; Who, in that Publick and Exalted Station, preserves all the Innocence and Sanctity of a Private Life ; Who is Superior to all the Temptations, which a great Power suggests, and which nothing but as great

U 4 Good

S E R M. Goodness ever overcomes ; and to whom,
viii. therefore, Her Subjects seem to be almost
as much oblig'd for the Shining Pattern of
unaffected Piety, which She sets them,
as for all the other Blessings of Her
Prosperous Reign. The Accession of
such a Queen to a Crown is indeed a Felicity,
which we may commemorate An-
nually, with a Devout and Sincere Joy :
God grant, that we may commemorate it
Often ! And that we may still find more
and more reason thankfully to acknow-
ledge it !

Finally, the Emperors of *Rome*, for
whom the Primitive Christians were ob-
lig'd to Pray, and to give Thanks, were
their avow'd Enemies, and Persecutors ;
who did, what they could, to hinder the
Establishment of the Church of *Christ*, and
to suppress those very Assemblies, wherein
these Devotions were offer'd up to God in
their behalf

Whereas She, for whom we now
Adore and Bless the good Providence of
God, is, by Her Office, and by her Inclina-
tion, the Defender, and Friend, the Pa-
troness

tronels, and Nursing-Mother of his ~~S E R M.~~ Church establish'd amongst us. In this ~~VIII.~~ Church she was Baptiz'd and Bred ; and, therefore, naturally loves it ; She was made early and thoroughly acquainted with its Doctrine and Government, and, consequently values it ; She hath been a Religious Frequenter of its Worship, and a steady Adherer to its Interest ; and was prepared, in the late times of Distress and Danger, to Suffer with it, and for it. From her, therefore, now She is advanced to a Throne, all the Members, and Ministers of this Church may justly promise themselves, not only the Opportunity of *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life*, (the utmost which the first Christians could hope for from Their Emperors) but Farther Advantages ; not merely Protection, but all suitable Instances of Royal Favour and Encouragement.

Witness Her late Act of Princely Bounty and Compassion to the Poor Clergy of this Church : An Act, un-equalled by any Prince, nay, by all our
Princes,

S E R M. Princes, since the Reformation; and
VIII. which (I was going to say) may atone for
Acts of a very different kind, done in
some of their Reigns. It griev'd Her Reli-
gious Heart to see, that Those, who
wait at the Altar, should not *partake*
with the Altar, in such a Measure, as is
requisite to preserve the Respect due to
their Characters, and to give Encourage-
ment, and Success to their Labours. She
seem'd to hear them complaining, in the

Ps cxliii. pathetick Words of the Psalmist; *Have
3. 4. Mercy upon us, O Lord, have Mercy
upon us; for we are exceedingly filled
with Contempt: Our Soul is exceedingly
filled with the Scorning of those that are
at Ease, and with the Contempt of the
Proud.*

To rescue Them, and the Religion which they taught, from these Disad-
vantages, She extended her Beneficence in
the most ample Manner, and took Care
to have the good Effects of it perpetuated
to Future Ages; thro' the Clearful Assit-
ance of those, who Compose this Illu-
strious Assembly, and whose Assitance, we
are sure, will never be wanting, to per-
fect

fect any Work, that is begun for the Honour, Advantage, and Security of the ~~VIII.~~ Church of *England*. Scarce any but a ~~VIII.~~ Royal Heart was capable of entertaining so large a Design ; as none but Royal Hands were, in a Degree, equal to the Execution of it.

The Benefaction is, indeed, worthy of Her, from whom it sprung ; and carries in it Marks of a Wisdom, as Extensive as Her Goodness. For it is not confined, tho' Given, to those who Minister in Holy Things ; the Happy Fruits, and Effects of it will, through this Channel, be conveyed to all Ranks and Orders of Men among us. All will share in that Munificence, which redounds to the Service of Religion, the Common Inheritance, and Blessing of All ; and which gives Life and Weight to the Instructions of Those, who, as meanly as they may be thought of on other Accounts, are yet *the Ambassadors of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.*

An unenvied Bounty, therefore, it needs must be ; a Good, which cannot

S E R M. decently be *evil spoken of*, even by Such
viii. (if there be any such) who wish not well
either to the Objects, or the Bestower of
it.

Great and groundleis Reproaches have, in other Respects, been cast on Our Church, as if there were still some Remains of Popery in it. Poor Vicarages are really Such; which took their Rise from the pretended Vicar of *Christ*, who endowed Abbies, and Monasteries, often-times, with the Spoils of Church-Livings, for the Support and Maintenance of his Spiritual Tyranny. 'Twas the great Ble-mish of our Reformation, that when Religious Hous-es were suppressed, some Part, at least, of their Revenue was not restored to its Original Use. But the Defects of that Time were, we Trust, reserv'd to be supplied by Her Majesty; and the goodly Frame of our Constitution is to be perfected, as it was modelled, by the Hand of a Woman.

A Prince, less solicitous for the Good of Religion, tho' intent on such a Wark, would yet have deferred it, till the Expensive

pensive War, wherein we are engaged, s E R M .
was brought to a Close. But the Com- VIII.
passion, and Godly Zeal of our Gracious
Sovereign would not be checked by this
Consideration : The Love of doing Good
overcame all the Difficulties, which lay
in the Way towards doing it. She
thought, that to consecrate One Part of
Her Revenue to so Pious an Use, would
draw a Blessing on the Management of
all the other Branches of it ; That the
Cruſe of Oil would not fail ever the
sooner, for bestowing a Portion of it on a
Prophet, or any of the Sons of the Pro-
phets ; That the Earnest Prayers of Those,
whom she thus relieved, would be as Ser-
viceable to her in this War, as the In-
come itself ; and that Her Charity would
in the Expressions of the Son of Syrach,
Fight for ber against ber. Enemies Eccl. xxxix. 19.
better than a mighty Spear and a Strong Sbield.

And, surely, the Unanimous and
Early Dispatch of the Supplies, the Pre-
sent Height of Publick Credit, and the
Eagerness with which all her Subjects
press

SER. M. pres to fill Her Coffers with their Loans,
VIII. are not Signs, that She hath by any Act
of misapply'd Bounty hitherto lost Ground
either in the Favour of Heaven, or in the
Affection, and Esteem of Her People.

May that God, whom she thus serves,
and imitates, extend her Life and Reign
beyond the Ordinary Term of either; and
Crown every Year of them with new In-
stances of his Goodness to Her, and to
these Kingdoms!

*Now, unto the King Eternal, Immor-
tal, Invisible, the only Wise God,
be Honour, and Glory, for ever and
ever! Amen.*

*The Rule of doing as we would be
done unto;*

Explain'd in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd before Her

M A J E S T Y

A T

St. James's CHAPEL,

On Sunday, Nov. 5. 1704.

St. MATTH. vii. 12.

*All things, whatsoever ye would that Men
should do unto you, do ye even so to
them; for this is the Law and the
Prophets.*

THE Sentence I have read unto s E R M.
T you, is very fitly plac'd towards ix.
the Close of our Saviour's admirable 
Sermon

SER M. Sermon on the Mount, as being, in
IX. great Measure, the Epitome and Sum of
what the Divine Preacher had there ex-
pref'd more at large. Nor it is less fitly
order'd to be recited at the Holy Table,
in the most Solemn Part of the Service
of this Day; on which we meet annually
to Commemorate our Deliverance from
the Attempts of those bloody and merci-
less Men, who seem to have out-done all
their Predecessors and Successors in Wick-
edness, by a notorious Contempt of this
great Evangelical Rule, and of all the
Principles of common Humanity. The
Practice of those Conspirators was the
perfect Reverse of this Precept; and we
cannot, therefore, better be taught, or
incited to detest the one, than by a due Il-
lustration and Enforcement of the other.
This I shall attempt, by offering to your
Thoughts some Considerations, First, on
the Rule here laid down; *All Things,*
whatsoever ye would that Men should do
unto you, do ye even so to them? and then
on the short, but full *Encomium*, bestow'd
upon it, that it is *the Law and the Pro-*
phets:

phets: Which shall be follow'd by some S E R M. *Inferences*, naturally arising from the Whole; and the General Reflections ad-vanc'd (tho' they may all along easily be understood to refer, yet) shall afterwards be particularly apply'd to the Subject of this Day's Solemnity.

As to the Rule itself, we may distinctly consider the just *Extent* and *Bounds* of it, the *Reason* of its *Preferableness* to all other Rules, in Point of *Evidence* and *Conviction*, the manifest *Equity* and *Exactness*, the peculiar *Properties* and *Advantages* of it.

All tnings whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them! Words of great Force and Energy: and yet the most simple, plain, and perspicuous that can be! And which therefore Commentators do (as they too often do) obscure and perplex, by a Pretence of Explaining. The only possible Doubt is, concerning the *Extent* of the *Matter* contain'd in them: For it must be allow'd, that there are many Cases, wherein we are by no means oblig'd to grant

see R.M. that to others, which we ourselves per-
ix. haps (were we in their Circumstances,
and they in ours) might be willing
enough, unreasonably willing, to obtain
from them. A Benefactor is not bound
to comply with the Demands of such as
ask unmerited Favours; tho' conscious,
that He himself might be apt to make
as extravagant Requests, were it his turn
to be the Object of another Man's Bene-
fiscence. A Magistrate is not at Liberty,
much less under any Obligation to turn
the Edge of Justice from an importunate
Offender; because, if He himself were
the Criminal, he should certainly, and
equally desire to escape unpunished. The
Rule, therefore, which makes what we
desire of other Men, the Measure of our
dealing toward them, is to be under-
stood not of vicious and excessive De-
sires, but of such only as are fit and rea-
sonable; such Requests as we can, in
our calmest Thoughts, justify to our-
selves; such as, we are sure, may be
made without Indecency, and cannot be
refus'd without Inhumanity. And, un-
der

der this necessary Limitation, the Precept ~~S E R M.~~ of the Text may be thus understood: IX.

“ Put thy self into such a Man’s Condition, and consider, what Treatment, what Favours, in That Case, thou might’st fairly and justly expect from Him; and be Thou fair to deal with Him, according to those thy just and regular Expectations.” And this I take to be the true Explication of that other equivalent Precept, given in the *Gospel*, to *Love our Neighbours as ourselves*; which we may then, in the most proper and strict Sense of the Words, be said to do, when we, first, place ourselves in our Neighbour’s stead, and, then, learn to love him; by considering, What Degree of Love and Good-will, of Forbearance and Forgiveness, we might, under that Change of Circumstances, challenge from him.

It may be thought, that the Rule, thus temper’d and qualify’d, will not be of any special Use, or Moment to us, in the Direction of our Practice; inasmuch as the Lines of Duty do not seem to be

see R M. more clearly mark'd out, by this Method
ix. of Comparison, than they would have
been, by a direct Injunction to us, so to
deal with others, as right Reason and
our Consciences inform us, that we ought
to deal with them. For, after all, when
we have made Another Man's Case Our's,
we are still left to judge, what, under such
a Change of Circumstances, we might,
in Equity and Reason, expect from him,
before we can determine, after what
manner we are to behave ourselves to-
wards him : And, therefore, which way
soever we take the Measure of our Duty ;
to the Bar of Equity and Reason we must,
it seems, in order to the fixing it always
finally appeal.

'Tis true, we must— But the Maxim
of the Text is That, which, of all others,
doth most effectually assist us towards
making a free Use of our Reason, and
forming right Judgment of Things, on
such Occasions : For, by the Means of it,
we are able to consider our Duty without
Prejudice, and to state the Bounds of it
impartially and fairly. When we deter-
mine

mine amiss concerning the Obligations ~~S E R M.~~
incumbent upon us in Respect of other ~~IX.~~
Men ; 'tis by Reason of that strong Weight
of Self-Love, which, like a Bias, in-
clines, and secretly sways our Minds
towards that Side on which our Own
Interest lies. To set this Error right,
we suppose ourselves to be the Men,
who are to receive this Treatment *from*
Others, which we are about to practise
toward Them ; and, then, the same
Selfish Principle makes that appear very
hard and unreasonable, which before
it inclined us to approve ; and thus
our warp'd and perverted Judgment,
by being bent as much towards the
Opposite Side, recovers its Straitness.
The Rule of the Text, therefore, is
at the Bottom, a wise Art of rebating
one Degree of our Partiality by an-
other ; it enables us to take two several
Views of our Duty, to eye it in dif-
ferent Situations, and under different
Lights ; and by that means, more di-
stinctly and thoroughly to discern it.
And, in this Sense, *Measuring ourselves* ^{2 Cor. 12.}

318 *The Rule of Doing as we would*
SERM. *by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with*
IX. *ourselves, we take the surest way to be both*
Just and Wife.

There's nothing, we know, that gives a Man so true and lively a Sense of the Sufferings of Others, or restrains him so powerfully from Doing Unsightly and Oppressive things, as his having smarted, formerly, himself, under the Experience of them. Now, the supposing another Man's ill Usage to be Ours, is, the giving ourselves a present Sense, as it were, a kind of feign'd Experience of it; which doth, for the time, serve all the Purposes of a True one.

Upon these Accounts it is, that the Precept of the Text carries greater *Evidence*, and a fuller Degree of *Conviction* in it, than any other Rule of Morality; its apparent *Equity* and *Reasonableness*, is what we are next to consider. And this is so plain a Point, as not to want, or indeed be capable of, a solemn Proof: For the Precept manifestly aims at That, which is the known Foundation of Equity and Justice, in all Matters of Intercourse

tercourse between Man and Man; the S E R M. reducing things to one common Standard, by the Application of which they are all to be examin'd, and try'd. *Thou Deut xxv.*
shalt not have in thy Bag, or in thine^{13. 14.}
House, (said the Levitical Law) *divers Weights, and divers Measurcs; a Great and a Small,* [i. e. one, wherewith to Buy; and another, wherewith to Sell:] *But thou shalt have a perfect and just Weight, a perfect and just Measure shalt thou have.* What is said here of ordinary Traffick and Dealing, holds as true of the General Commerce of Human Life, and that Exchange of Good Offices by which Society is upheld: There must be *a perfect Weight, and a just Measurc,* by which all Men are mutually oblig'd to regulate their Conduct, in acting and suffering, in commanding and obeying, in giving and receiving; and this can be no other than the Equal and Righteous Rule of the Text, the *Doing in all Cases, and to all Persons, even as we would be done unto.* There is no one so absurd and unreasonable, as not to see and

S E R M. acknowledge the Absolute Equity of
ix. this Command, in the Theory, how-
ever he may swerve and decline from it
in his Practice ; and to agree upon it as
that Golden Mean, which, if univer-
sally observ'd, would make the World
universally Happy ; every Man a Bene-
factor, a Good Angel, a Deity, as it
were, to his Fellow-Creatures ; and
Earth, the very Image of Heaven ! I need,
I can say no more, concerning the Rea-
sonableness of this Precept : However,
it may help to excite and quicken your
Desires and Hopes of obeying it, if I
proceed, as I propos'd, to point out some
distinguishing *Properties* and *Advantages*
of it.

The First of which is, that it is alike
easy and obvious to all Understandings,
to the meanest, and most ignorant Men,
as well as to those of the greatest Parts
and Improvements. God is, on this,
as well as on other Accounts, no Re-
specter of Persons : having made that
which is most necessary, most common,
and, consequently, suited this Principle,
which

which all Men have equal Occasion to s E R M.
use, equally to the Apprehensions of all ix.
Men. They, therefore, who are inca-
pable of long Trains in Deductions of Rea-
son, and of adapting the several Rules of
Morality to the various Circumstances of
Action, are yet able (as able as the acutest
Philosophers, or Casuists) to look into
their own Hearts, to ask themselves this
plain Question, and to return a clear An-
swer to it: "Would I myself be content,
" that others should thus deal with me?
" Why then should I so deal with any
" Man?"

Human Laws are often so numerous,
as to escape our Memories; so darkly
sometimes, and inconsistently worded, as
to puzzle our Understandings; and their
original Obscurity is not seldom improv'd
by the nice Distinction and subtle Rea-
sonings of those who profess to clear
them: So that, under these several Dis-
advantages, they lose much of their
Force and Influence; and, in some Cases,
raise more Disputes than, perhaps, they
determine. But here is a Law, attended
with

see R.M. with none of these Inconveniences; the
 ix. grossest Minds can scarce misapprehend
 it; the weakest Memories are capable of
 retaining it: No perplexing Comment
 can easily cloud it; the Authority of no
 Man's Gloss upon Earth can (if we are
 but sincere) sway us to make a wrong
 Construction of it. What is said of all
 the Gospel-Precepts by the Evangelical
 Prophet, is more eminently true of this;
 II. xxxv. 8. *It is an High-Way; and the Way-faring
 Man, tho' a Fool, shall not err therein.*

'Tis not enough that a Rule, which
 is to be of General Use, is suited to all
 Capacities; so that, where-ever it is re-
 presented to the Mind, it is presently
 agreed to: It must also be apt to offer
 itself to our Thoughts, and lie ready for
 present Use, upon all Exigencies, and
 Occasions. And such, remarkably such,
 is that which our Lord here recommends
 to us. We can scarce be so far surprized
 by any immediate Necessity of Acting, as
 not to have time for a short Recourse to
 it, room for a sudden Glance, as it were
 upon it, in our Minds; where it rests,
 and

and sparkles always, like the *Urim* and ~~S E R M.~~
T h u m b i m, on the Breast of *Aaron.* ix.
There is no Occasion for us to go in 
Search of it to the Oracles of Law,
dead, or living; to the *Code*, or *Pan-*
dects; to the Volumes of Divines, or
Moralists: *Quod petis, hic est*, we need
look no farther than ourselves for it:
For (to use the apposite Expressions of
Moses) *This Commandment, which I Deut xxx.*
Command thee this Day, is not bidden^{11, 12,}
from thee, neither is it far off. It is
not in Heaven, that thou shouldest say,
Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and
bring it unto us, that we may bear it,
and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea,
that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over
the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that
we may bear it, and do it? But the
Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy
Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou
may'st do it

It is moreover, a Precept, particularly
fitted for Practice; as it involves in
the very Notion of it a Motive, stirring
us up to Do what it Enjoins. Other

S E R M. Moral Maxims propose naked Truths to
IX. the *Understanding*, which operate often
but faintly and slowly on the *Will* and
Passions, the two Active Principles of
the Mind of Man: But it is the peculiar
Character of This, that it addresseth it-
self equally to all these Powers; imparts
both Light and Heat to us; and, at the
same time that it informs us certainly
and clearly, what we are to do, excites
us also, in the most tender and moving
manner, to the Performance of it. We
can see our Neighbour's Misfortune,
without a sensible Degree of Concern;
which yet we cannot forbear expressing,
when we have once made His Condition
our Own, and determined the Measure
of our Obligation towards him, by what
We ourselves should, in such a Case,
Expect from Him: Our Duty grows
immediately our Interest, and Pleasure,
by the means of this powerful Principle;
the Seat of which is, in truth, not more
in the Brain, than in the Heart of Man:
It appeals to our very Senses; and ex-
erts its secret Force in so prevailing a
way

way, that it is even Felt, as well as Under-
stood by us.

IX.

The Last Recommendation of this
Rule I shall mention, is its Vast and Com-
prehensive Influence: For it extends to
all Ranks and Conditions of Men, and
to all kinds of Action and Intercourse
between them; to matter of Charity,
Generosity and Civility, as well as Jus-
tice; to Negative, no less than Positive
Duties. The Ruler and the Ruled, are
alike subject to it; Publick Communities
can no more exempt themselves from
its Obligation, than Private Persons;
All Persons must fall down before it, all PL. lxxii.
Nations must do it Service. And, with "
respect to this Extent of it, it is, that our
Blessed Lord pronounces it, in the Text,
to be *the Law and the Prophets*. His
Meaning is, that, Whatever Rules of the
Second Table are deliver'd in the Law of
Moses, or in the larger Comments and
Explanations of that Law, made by the
Other Writers of the Old Testament,
[here, and elsewhere, styled *the Prophets*] they are all virtually comprised in this

SERM. one short significant Saying, *Whatsoever*

IX. *ye would that Men shoud do unto you,*

do ye even so unto them: From this, as
from their Common Source, they were
all Originally derived; and into this they

Gal. v. 14. may be all ultimately resolved; *For all*

the Law is fulfilled in One Word, saith
St. Paul, *even in This, Thou shalt Love*
tby Neighbour as thy Self: And I have
shew'd You, that this Word, is the same
in Sense with the Word, or Precept of
the Text; tho' it be not deliver'd in so
clear, so expressive, and so convincing
a Manner. And this Word, therefore,

Tim. i. the same Apostle calls elsewhere, *The*

5. *End of the Commandment;* and St.

James ii. *The Royal Law:* That, (they

8. both mean) in which all the Lines of
Duty, relating to our Neighbour, center;
and under which, as under one common
Head and Principle, they may be reduc'd
and rang'd.

Various are the Uses, into which this
important Truth, thus handled, is capa-
ble of being improv'd.

For from hence I might, in the first place, take Occasion to consider, Whether, and how far, the Precept here given to be the *Whole*, not only of the *Law*, and the *Prophecy*s, but of the *Gospel* also; and what Evangelical Duties* there are, which seem, as the Schools speak, to *transcend it*; to be (as Mysteries are, in respect of Reason) not indeed *against* this great Principle, but *above*, and *beyond* it; and such, as we cannot thoroughly account for, without taking the Consideration of another World into our Schemes and Reasonings.

I might, in the next Place, proceed to shew, how large a Share Moral Truths have, even in the Body of reveal'd Doctrines; since the Precept of the Text, which comprehends only the Duty we

* Grotius in Acta xv. 20. *Si quis dicens velis, hunc verborum summi comprehendendi omnia Evangelii precepta, fallitur. Cum preceptum de Uno Deo colendo per Christum, de abnegatione Sui, de subiectu Crucis, non sint tota hanc ambitum: alio etiam non nisi obiectu admodum hoc referri possunt.*

S E R M. owe to our Neighbours, is said to be *the Law and the Prophets.* An Expression,
 ix. *Law and the Prophets.* An Expression,
 not indeed to be taken rigorously, and in the Letter! But which may however be understood to imply, that, as a great Part of Holy Writ is employ'd in directly pressing the Duties abridg'd in this Precept, so the rest of it plainly points and refers to them: Even the highest Mysteries of Faith were not made known to us, without some Regard to our Improvement in Practical Virtues; and the Knowledge of those, unless it tends to quicken our Obedience to these, will be of no manner of Service to us, will neither better us in this World, nor save us in the next,

From the Assertion, in the Close of the Text, it may be yet farther, and more clearly inferred, That there is a Chain of Moral Reasoning, by which the several Duties of the Second Table are connected together, and have an orderly Dependence on One Common Principle, out of which they were drawn. That Virtue, therefore, is not the blind Ho-
image

image of our Nature, arbitrarily exacted ~~S E R M.~~
from us; but a Duty fitted and proportion'd ^{I^{xx.}} to the Light of our Faculties, and every way our *Reasonable Service*: In a ^{Rom. xii.} word, that Morality is a true and proper ^{1.} Science, and all the Parts of it capable of strict Demonstration.

An Observation, of manifold and excellent Use! For it teaches us to reject the Pretences of those vain and fanciful Enthusiasts, who have fram'd a Rule of Duty to themselves, as contrary to the common Sense and Reason, as it is to the current Language of Mankind; so Refin'd and Sublime, as to be utterly unintelligible and impracticable: It is not to be learn'd, or confuted, in the Method of other Doctrines; It is to be made out only by the Force of some Unaccountable Impressions; by a Light, that shines inward, and which cannot be communicated, or discover'd. But *We have not* Eph. iv.
so learned Christ: On the contrary, we ^{20.} are assur'd, that we do our Lord and Master good Service, such as he will own, and reward, when we apply ourselves to

S E R M. establish the Truths of our Religion upon

ix. Principles of Reason, and to argue Men
 ~~~~~ into their Duty by appealing to Natural  
 Light, to the Certainty of first Principles,  
 and to the Evident Deductions which may from thence be made by  
 the sure Rules of Discourse; and that  
 we are not to regard the Censures of  
 those, who, on this Account, shall style  
 us mere Moral Teachers, and Carnal  
 Reasoners; but will not allow us to  
 speak by the Spirit, or to be at all ac-  
 quainted with the Life and Power of  
 Godliness. As if Religion were a thing  
 design'd not to be understood, or made  
 out! but lost some of her native Ma-  
 jesty and Force, when once we came to  
 reason upon it!

Nor would it be an Unprofitable Re-  
 flection, to observe from hence the great  
 Benignity and Goodness of God, who  
 hath made even our *Own Will*, and our  
*Self-Love*, a complete Law of Action,  
 and Measure of our Duty to us. *All things  
 whatsoever ye would* [i. e. whatsoever  
 Ye are willing] *that Men should do unto*

You, do Ye even so to them ! Surely a very S E R M.  
Easy Yoke, and Light Burthen ! We may IX.  
be averse, perhaps, from submitting to  
the Divine Will, or to the Will of any of  
our Fellow Creatures, exercising Autho-  
rity over us : But can we be otherwise  
than contented, and pleased, in submit-  
ting to our *Own* Will, whatever it is ?  
And yet a Submission to *That*, (when  
regulated by proper Circumstances, and  
Views) is all that is required of us.  
Merciful S.viour, thou saidst once indeed  
to thy Father, as thou wert Man, *Not my Lukexxi.*  
*Will, but thine be done !* But who could <sup>42.</sup>  
expect that thou shouldst have said the  
same thing to Us also, as thou art God !  
However, thus in Effect, thou hast said;  
in the Precept now before us. Teach  
us, O Lord, by the means of this Pre-  
cept, so duly to regulate our Wills, that  
we may safely follow them ! Make  
Thy Will, Ours ; that so, in doing our  
Own Will, we may be sure to fulfil  
Thine also !

We see from hence, how far the Gospel is from suppressing, or checking the

S E R M. Principle of *Self-Love* in us, which it  
IX. makes the Ground and Rule of all that  
Love we owe to Others ; and which, therefore we may innocently, nay, usefully carry to what Degree, what Height we please, if we do but take Care that the Love of our Neighbour keeps pace with that of our Self, and is govern'd by it. Very Extravagant, therefore, and Unwarrantable are those Flights of Devotion, which some Enthusiasitical Saints of the Church of *Rome* have indulg'd themselves in ; who make it necessary for every Christian, in order to his arriving at Perfection, to divest himself of all manner of Regard for himself ; nay to despise, to hate, and to abhor himself, in the utmost Propriety of the Expression. Certainly, if what these Mystical Divines say, be true, impossible it is for a perfect Man to love his Neighbour at all : Since he is not allow'd, by their Scheme, to love himself ; and yet is bound to love his Neighbour, as he loves himself, (or, which is all one, to do as he would be done unto) by our Lord's express Determination.

Several

Several other weighty Truths there are; *s e r m.*  
which this fruitful Theme would sug- ix.  
~~~~~  
gest; and most of those, I have men-
tion'd, might deserve to be handled more
largely. But I must contract my Thoughts
on this Head, that I may have room to in-
sist on one Plain, Useful Inference,
wherein I am to apply the Doctrine hi-
thereto deliver'd. It is this----If the Pre-
cept of the Text be so Fundamental and
Necessary, so obvious and Easy, so Sure
and Safe, so Full and Comprehensive a
Rule of Life and Manners; how inex-
cusable, upon all these Accounts, must
those Persons be, who, throughout the
whole Course of their Actions, shew,
that they do not regard it? I shall first, ex-
postulate the Case with such as offend
against this Precept at large; and, then,
consider that particular and flagrant In-
stance of the Breach of it which This
Day affords us.

Are we, then, any of us, professed
Contemners of Revealed Religion? I
hope, we are not; but those who are,
would still be thought to have a mighty

S E R M. Reverence for Reason (since by the Help
 ix. of Reason it is, that they endeavour to
 ~~~ throw off Revelation); and while they  
 have, this its Eldest and most Unquestion'd  
 Law should, methinks, be very Sacred to  
 them. What! Shall the great Masters of  
 Exact Thinking, and Idolizers of Reason  
 live in a perpetual Contradiction to the  
 first Principle of it! Will They, who  
 have so Little Light to guide themselves  
 by, (that of Nature alone) neglect to  
 make use even of that Little, which they  
 have? And yet, perhaps, there is no sort  
 of Men whatever, that offend so remark-  
 ably against the Evident Righteousness of  
 this Rule, as Those, who pretend most to  
 magnify the Principle from whence it  
 flows: There are none who pursue their  
 Pleasures so keenly, and sooth all their  
 Passions so carefully; are every way so  
 Selfish, and so directly set in Opposition  
 to this Generous and Equal Maxim; as  
 the Men, who will tell you, They adore  
 plain Common Sense, but cannot digest  
 a Mystery. From whence it is manifest,  
 that their Disesteem of Faith proceeds

not from any just Esteem they have of S E R M. Reason, or any Regard they bear to its Laws ; but merely from a Spirit of Libertinism, and a Desire of coming under as few Obligations as possible. 'Tis not a Freedom of Thinking, which they aim at ; but a Freedom of Living, and of Doing what they please, without the Controul of Law, or Fear of Punishment. And, in order to this, one good Step is, to shake off Revealed Religion ; and such an One, as is usually follow'd by another, the parting with All Religion, even That which Nature itself prescribes. To these Reasoners therefore we say, that the Rule of *doing as they would be done by*, is not (what they are so jealous of) any Imposition upon their Understandings, any puzzling mysterious Doctrine ; it is all Pure Light, and Evidence, *and it is no Dark- ness at all.* Why then do they not Submit to it ? Why do they, of all Men Living, do as they would not be done by ? Oppress and trample upon their Inferiors, Revile their Betters, and Supplant their Equals ? Carry on their Unlawful De-

IX.



John i.

5.

see M. fires, without Stint, or Bounds, to the

ix. Injuring the Property of those who are  
too weak to contend with them, to ~~the~~ the  
defaming their Neighbour's Reputation,  
or defiling his Bed? Why in a word,  
do they make themselves the only Cen-  
tre of all their Actions, Wishes, and De-  
signs? and regard nothing, that is without  
them any farther than it may be useful  
to their Purposes and Enjoyments? Let  
us see this lofty Race of Men in good  
earnest stoop to this plain Dictate of Rea-  
son; and then we shall be inclin'd to  
think them sincere, when they pretend to  
harken to the Voice of Reason, and to  
that only; and may have room to hope,  
that the good God, who sees them ho-  
nestly practising all those Virtues which  
flow from this Rule, will add what is be-  
hind, and, in his own time graft Grace  
upon Nature.

But do we (as every one, I trust, doth,  
who hears me this Day) profess ourselves  
to be the Disciples of Christ? And, can  
we think ourselves really to Be, what we  
profess, while we openly and avowedly  
break

break this great Precept of *Chrifṭ*; the S E R M. main Hinge, upon which the Morality IX. of his Gospel turns? We may boast, if we please, of our having all Knowledge, and all Faith, and of our Understanding all Mysteries: But if we do not govern our Lives by this Truth, which is evident by Nature, 'twill be to no purpose, that we firmly affent to those Truths which are revealed to us by Grace. We deny Christianity, indeed, if we reject These: But if we live in Contradiction to That, we renounce the Principles of Human Nature itself; without supposing which, there can be no Christianity. Let us Profess, and Believe what we will; unless We Do also as We would be done unto, all Our Faith, and Our Religion is vain. Nor is it Vain only, and Unprofitable, in Respect of our Selves; it is also of pernicious Consequence to Others, who from such Instances as these, will take Occasion to disparage the Influence and Efficacy of Revealed Religion, and to harden themselves in their Infidelity. The Ridiculers of Divine Faith, the Despisers

see R. M. spisers of Mysteries, never exercise their

ix. Scornful Talent with greater Pleasure, or

Success, than when they attack the Principles of Christianity, by comparing them with the Practice of Christians; especially in this Capital Article of all Schemes of Religion, *the doing to Men as we would be done unto*; and can point out our manifest and scandalous Violations of this plain Rule of Reason, while we pretend to embrace all the Sublime Doctrines, and to inherit all the glorious Advantages of a Divine Revelation. The Heathen

Mat. xii. Emperor, *Severus, shall rise up in the Judgment with such a Generation of Christians, and condemn them*: For, He,

41. by the Light of Nature, was taught highly to reverence this Precept; it was written on the Walls of his Palace, and in the Banners of his Army; it was engrav'd in his very Heart, and transcribed from thence into his Practice. Would to God, that many of those pretended Vicars of *Christ*, who have since erected their Thrones in the Chief Seat of this Prince's Empire, had alike succeeded him

in

in an awful and Conscientious Regard s E R M.  
for this Excellent Maxim, and had been, IX.  
in that Respect, as good Christians, (or  
rather, as good Heathens) as He was !  
They would not then, have become the  
Authors and Fomenters of all that Discord  
and Confusion, all those Wars and Massa-  
cres, those Conspiracies and Rebellions,  
with which they have, for many Centu-  
ries past, shook the Thrones of Princes,  
and disturbed the Quiet of this Western  
World. Nor would they, in order to  
cover and palliate these Wicked Attempts,  
have openly encouraged the Casuists of  
their Communion to publish such loose  
and scandalous Systems of Morals, as, in-  
stead of being Comments on this Rule,  
are a perfect Contradiction to it, and are  
calculated, not to bring up Mens Obedi-  
ence to the Terms of the Gospel, but to  
bring down the Gospel-Terms, as near as  
can be, to the Infirmities and Failings,  
nay, to the Corruptions and Vices of Hu-  
man Nature.

The Time would fail me, should I at-  
tempt to mention the most remarkable  
Instances,

see R.M. Instances, which would readily offer themselves, in either kind : That One Instance, which the Treason of this Day affords us, doth, in Effect, comprehend the Wickedness of all the rest ; and is, when briefly insisted on, sufficient to raise in us a due Abhorrence of those Ungodly Principles and Practices, by which the Papacy hath enlarg'd its Interest, and establish'd its Spiritual Tyranny over the Understandings and Consciences of Men.

The Treason of This Day was a Contrivance, Wicked and Cruel beyond Example, and beyond Expression ; Such, as the Ears of any Honest Heathen when they hear it related, must tingle at ; Such as, if perpetrated in the Infancy of Christianity, would have gone near to have arrested the Course of it, in Countries as yet unconverted, and to have render'd even the Miracles, done for its Confirmation, insignificant and vain ; In a word, Such, as nothing but the Malice of One of that Order, which hath been, ever since its first Erection, the Scourge and Pest of Mankind, could have

pro-

projected ; nor Any, but some of its Bi-~~S E R M.~~  
gotted and Furious Votaries, durst to ~~IX.~~  
have Executed. Blessed *Iesu!* That ever ~~~~~~~~~  
Men, more particularly calling themselves  
by Thy Name, and pretending more im-  
mediately to devote themselves to Thy  
Service, should so far forget the Law of  
Humanity and Kindness, which was vi-  
sible in every Part of thy Behaviour,  
while thou wast on Earth, and is still le-  
gible in every Page of thy Gospel ! That  
they should be misled, by the perverse  
Comments of their Own Casuists upon  
this Law, so far, as to believe, that a  
Massacring Spirit was reconcileable to the  
Spirit of Christianity, and that the ge-  
nuine Principles of it could lead, or per-  
mit Men to overturn States and King-  
doms ! Such Ill Effects may spring from  
the best of Causes, Religion, when per-  
verted and abused ! Such Horrid Impieties  
may Men arrive at, when they have once  
fixed this Persuasion firmly in them-  
selves, That, how vile soever the At-  
tempts are, in which they engage, yet, if  
the End be Good, it justifies and sanctifies  
the

S E R M. the Means; and that the plainest Rules  
 ix. and Duties of the Gospel do not bind  
 ~~~~~ Those who are, as they imagine, propa-  
 gating the Interests of it.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, who
 didst, as on this Day, after a marvellous
 manner, disappoint their bloody De-
 signs, when they were even ready to take
 place, and didst suffer our Princes, our
 Prelates, our Nobles, all the Chief Orna-
 ments, and Supports of thy pure undefiled
 Ps. cxxiv. Religion Established among us, to *escape*
 7. out of their Hands, *even as a Bird from*
the Snare of the Fowler! Surely, the
 xxvi. 10. *Wrath of Man* hath praised, and *shall*
praise thee: — The Remainder of Wrath
shalt thou restrain.

I need not endeavour to raise your
 Thankfulness for the Mercies of this Day,
 by shewing, that, as distant as they are,
 they still belong to us. Some Blessings
 wax not old, or decay; but, like the
 Rod of the Tribe of *Lewi*, laid up in
 the Tabernacle, though seemingly fabless
 and dead, do yet shoot; and send forth
 their Blooms. And such is That we
 now

now Commemorate ; even Now we taste s E R M.
the sweet Fruits and Effects of it : For to IX.
this Day's Deliverance (this Day's Double  Deliverance) it is owing, that we are
freed from the Fears of Papal Supersti-
tion and Bondage ; that we enjoy all our
Religious, and Civil Liberties, all that
is dear and valuable to us, in respect of
This World, or Another ; and even that
we see HER on the Throne (the Throne
of her Royal Ancestors, design'd this Day
for Slaughter) Who, by sitting there
protects and secures us in these Enjoy-
ments.

Great and manifold have the Instances
been of God's Interposition to rescue
this Church and Nation, when they most
needed it ; nor is his *Hand yet shortned* Isa. 45. &
that it cannot save : For, behold, what
mighty things he hath lately wrought for
us ! In how seasonable and surprizing a
manner he hath bless'd the Arms, which
have been taken up in Defence of his
True Religion, the Liberties of Europe,
and the Rights of Mankind, against the
Common Invader and Destroyer of all
of

~~serm.~~ of them? Whose haughty Heart he hath

ix. at last humbled, and stain'd his boasted
 Glory; the Vain Idol, which that proud
 Monarch set up, and commanded all Na-
 tions to fall down and worship! The
 Success, which God hath given us, is
 great in itself; but much greater in the
 Consequences which it seems to promise.
 For who knows but that, by this single
 Blow, the Fate of that Kingdom may at
 length be decided? of that Insolent King-

Num.
xxiv. 21.

dom, who thought she had *put her Neft
 in the Rock*, whither none could Approach
 to hurt her? And seem'd (in the Expressi-

16. xlvii.
7, 8

ons of the Prophet) to say in her Heart,

*I shall be a Lady for ever; I am, and
 none else beside me?* Who knows, but
 that the mighty Hunter of Men may,
 from this Moment, be obliged to fore-
 go his Chace? May find it come to his
 turn to fly, and be pursued every where?
 and have the Preys, which he hath vio-
 lently seiz'd, ravish'd again out of his
 Hand! Who knows, but that the several
 Victories which he hath meanly stolen,
 or purchased, may now, after a more

fair

fair and generous manner, be regain'd ? S E R M.
and all the Laurels, he unjustly wears, ix.
be torn from his Temples, and plac'd on
the Head of *Another*, who better deserves
them ? Certain it is, that God hath al-
ready begun to do these great Things for
us ; which, unless we are wanting to our
selves, he will as certainly finish. Al-
ready, since this Blow was given, we
have seen the happy Effects of it, in the
Publick Confession of an Exhausted Ex-
chequer, and a Languishing Credit : Evils,
which, God be thanked, are neither felt,
nor feared by us at home, under the pre-
sent Vigilant and Wise Administration.

Do thou, O God, we beseech Thee,
go on to strengthen the Thing which thou
hast wrought for us ! Shew thy Servants
thy Work, and their Children thy Glory !
And the Glorious Majesty of the Lord our P.^{r.} lxviii.
God be upon us ! Prosper thou the Work ^{xc.} 16, 17.
of our Hands upon us ! O, prosper thou
our Handy-work.

Of Religious Retirement.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

St. James's CHAPEL,

On Friday, March 23. 1707.

MATTH. xiv. 23.

*When he had sent the Multitude away,
he went up into a Mountain, apart, to
Pray.*

IT hath been disputed, which is a S E R M, State of greater Perfection, the So-
cial, or the Solitary; whereas, in Truth, neither of these Estates is complete with-
out

SERM. out the Other ; as the Example of our
x. Blessed Lord (the Uttering Test and
Measure of Perfection) informs us. His
Life, (which ought to be the Pattern of
Ours) was a Mixture of Contemplation
and Action, of Austerity and Freedom :
We find him often, where the greatest
Concourse was, in the Market-Places,
in the Synagogues, and at Festival Enter-
tainments ; and we find him also retiring
from the Crowd into a Desert, or a
Garden, and there employing himself in
all kinds of Religious Exercise, and In-
tercourse with God, in Fasting, Medita-
tion, and Prayer. In Imitation of his
Spotless Example, we *may*, doubtless,
lead Publick Lives, Innocently, and
Usefully ; Conversing with Men, and
doing good to them ; mutually sowing,
and reaping the several Comforts and
Advantages of Human Society. But be-
cause the Pleasures of Conversation, when
too freely tasted, are Intoxicating, and
Dangerous ; because the Temptations we
there meet with are many and mighty ;
and even where the Spirit is *Willing* to
resist,

refist, yet the *Flesh* is often *Weak*; we s E R M. ought, therefore, to lessen the too great x.
'Complacence we are apt to have in such Satisfactions, by fit Intermissions of them; to strengthen our selves for such Publick Encounters, by our Religious Privacies; to retire from the World sometimes, and Converse with God, and our own Consciences; examining the State, and fortifying the Powers of our Souls, in Secrecy and Silence: We must do, as our Lord did, *Send the Multitudes away, and go up into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.*

I shall, from these Words, take Occasion to discourse to you concerning the Great (but much Neglected) Duty of *Religious Retreat and Recollection*. I shall, first, briefly shew you, under what Limitations I would be understood to recommend the Duty; and, then, What the Advantages are, which arise from a devout and discreet Performance of it.

I mean not to press upon you that sort of Retirement, which is so much esteem'd and practis'd in the Church of

~~S E R M.~~ *Rome*; where all Perfection is reckon'd

x. to consist in Solitude, and no Man is
 allow'd capable of arriving at the Height
 of Virtue, who doth not strip himself
 of all the Conveniences of Life, and
 renounce all manner of Acquaintance
 with the World, and the Things of it:
 I see not, wherein this State of Life
 claims the Pre-eminence over all others;
 how it is founded in Nature, and Reason;
 what particular Example, Precept, or
 Direction there is in the Gospel, inviting
 us to it. *John the Baptist* is, indeed, there
 represented, as sequestring himself from
 Human converse, and spending his time
in the Wilderness: but as he is said to
 have come *in the Spirit and Power of*
Elias, (a Spirit far different from the
 Spirit of the Gospel) and did, therefore,
 professedly imitate that Prophet, in his
 severe manner of Life, and Look, and
 Diet, and Garb, and Behaviour, and
 Doctrine; so his Example belonged, ra-
 ther to the *Mosaic State*, under which
 he lived and taught, than to the *Christian*
Dispensation, which began, where his

Luke i.
17.
ix. 55.

Preach-

Preaching ended. Nor did even the s E R M .
Baptist himself propose his own Practice, x.
as a Pattern to his Followers: on the con-
trary, when *the People, the Publicans,*
and the Soldiers enquir'd of him, *what*
they should do, to flee from the Wrath to
come, he did not exhort them to go out
of the World into the Wilderness; but
gave them such Directions only as related
to a faithful Discharge of their Duty in
their several Stations and Callings: And
when afterwards our Saviour began to
enter on his Ministry, and to appear
as our Saviour, by publishing the Gospel
of his Kingdom, we find nothing either
in his Actions, or his Doctrine, to coun-
tenance that Recluse and Solitary State,
which some since, who would be thought
best to have imitated his Example, and
obey'd his Precepts, have so zealously
espous'd and practis'd. His Divine Dis-
courses were chiefly spent in pressing
Men to exercise those Graces which
adorn the Sociable State: even his first
Sermon on the Mount to the Multitude
did, in the Entrance of it, recommend

serm. and enjoin a Publick, Conspicuous, and
 x. Exemplary Virtue ; and (with some Al-
 lusion, perhaps, to ~~that~~ Eminence on
 which he sat, and the Company which
 surrounded him) he then likened his Di-
 sciples to *a City set on an Hill, that can-*
 Mat v. *not be hid* ; he commanded them to
 14. *put their Light in a Candlestick, not un-*
 Ib. v. 15. *der a Bushel* ; and so to make it *shine be-*
 Ib. v. 16. *fore Men, that They seeing their good Works,*
might glorify their Father which is in
Heaven.

Far be it from me, however, to con-
 demn all those Good and Holy Persons,
 who have betaken themselves to this So-
 litary and Austere Course of Living.
 Doubtless, many of them were act'd by
 a sincere, but misguided, Principle of
 Piety ; the Fruits of which, tho' mix'd
 with a great Alloy of Superstition, did
 yet, in diverse Respects, redound to the
 Credit of Religion, and the Good of Man-
 kind. But supposing these to be Real,
 yet they were, I say, Uncommanded
 Instances of Virtue ; not possible, or, if
 possible, not fit to be practis'd by the
 far

far greater Part of Christians. The Retreat, therefore, which I am speaking of, is not that of Monks and Hermits, but of Men living in the World, and going out of it for a Time, in order to return into it; it is a Temporary, not a Total Retreat; such as we may leave off, or resume, at Pleasure, according as we have Need of it, or an Opportunity for it; such, as is consistent with all the Business, and even with the Innocent Pleasures of Life; and is so far from interfering with the Duties of our Publick Offices and Stations, that it disposes and enables us for the better Discharge of them. 'Tis this Sort of Retreat which may properly be made the matter of general Exhortation from the Pulpit, because it is really matter of general Obligation to every good and sincere Christian.

No Man is, or ought to be so deeply immers'd in the Affairs of this World, as not to be able to retire from them now and then into his Closet, there to mind the Concerns of another. Every Day

SERM. Day of his Life, Early, or Late, some

x. Moments he may and must find to bestow this Way ; the Lord's Day particularly is a great Opportunity of this kind, which can never wholly be neglected without Indevotion, or even without Scandal. And such also is the Annual Season of Recollection in which we are now far advanc'd ; not, I trust, without having employ'd it, in some measure, to those good Purposes for which it was intended. At such Times as these, either when the Labours and Ordinary Occupations of Life cease, or when Publick Diversions and Entertainments are forbidden ; Then every One, the Noble and the Mean, the Wealthy and the Poor, hath it certainly in his Power, if it be but in his Heart, to retire : to step aside from the Hurry and Vanities of Life, and all the Allurements of Sense, and to Examine, and Improve, and Enjoy himself in private.

That we may be all excited so to do, I shall proceed, in the next Place, to represent to You the several Advantages attending

attending this Religious Practice ; whe- s E R M.
ther we consider it as a Means of effacing x.
the ill Impressions made on our Minds in
Daily Conversation, or as an Opportunity
of pursuing farther Degrees of Perfection
and abounding in all the Methods of Spi-
ritual Improvement.

The Advantages of the first kind,
which it affords us, are plainly such as
These ; That it unites and fixes our scat-
tered Thoughts ; places us out of the
Reach of the most Dangerous Tempta-
tions ; frees us from the Insinuating Con-
tagion of Ill Examples, and hushes and lays
asleep those troublesome Passions, which
are the great Disturbers of our Repose and
Happiness.

A Dissipation of Thought is the Na-
tural and Unavoidable Effect of our Con-
versing much in the World ; where we
cannot help squandering a way a great deal
of Our Time upon Useless Objects, of no
true Worth in themselves, and of no real
Concern to us. We roule on in a Circle
of vain empty Pleasures, and are deliver'd
over continually from one slight Amuse-
ment

seem to another ; never seemingly very

x. Busy, and ever really very Idle ; applying our selves without Respite to That, which it becomes us most to neglect, and utterly neglectful of that One thing Necessary, which it becomes and behoves us most to pursue. This gives us by Degrees such a Levity and Wantonness of Spirit, as refuses Admittance to all serious Thoughts, and renders us incapable of Reflection : makes our Closet a Terrible Place to us, and Solitude a Burthen. To retrieve our selves from this vain, uncertain, roving, distracted way of thinking and living, it is requisite to retire frequently, and to Converse much with (what We above all things Love, and yet above all things hate to converse with) Our Selves ; to inure our Minds to Recollection, to fix them on the greatest and most concerning Objects, those which Religion suggests, and which will, by their Importance, deserve, and engage, and command our Attention ; till the busy Swarm of vain Images, that besets us, be thoroughly dispersed, and the

the several scatter'd Rays of Thought, by s E R M.
being thus collected together, do by little x.
and little warm our Frozen Hearts, and at ~~~~~
last produce an Holy Flame.

The Expedience of Retirement is yet greater, as it removes us out of the way of the most pressing and powerful Temptations that are incident to Human Nature. Ye all know by Experience, that These meet us most frequently, and affect us most strongly in Society; where our Senses, the great Inlets of Temptation, are most awaken'd, and tempting Objects, by their Number and Nearness, make the most Vivid and Lasting Impressions upon us. * Indeed, there is no Place, no State, or Scene of Life, that hath not its proper and peculiar Temptations; even Solitude it self is not without them: but they are few, and faint, in Comparison with those to which our Appearance

* Ο οὐ τὸν ἀργόν σέργει, τάσσεις μὲν ἡγεῖ τὸν αἰθλόντα λιθούν πολὺ καὶ περιπολεῖς δέουσι; οὐαρραίνει τὸν τάσσον, οὐαλλ' εἰσερχεις ἐπιστέλλεις καὶ τραγεῖς στριμόνας διατάσσει. Δει τὸν περιπολεῖν λιθοῦν τὸν αὐτὸν τὸν διηργήσαντας οὐαλλεῖς τὴν φρεγάνην ὅλην τῇ φρεγάνῃ.

Ἐργατ. τριτ. ἡγετ. p. 230. Edit. γερ. Στράτηγος σάβαν.

S E R M. on the great Stage of the World exposes
us; and whenever they attack us in our
Recesses, they do, or may find us pre-
par'd, and upon our Guard; we are then
at leisure to encounter them, and have
Helps near at Hand, which, if made Use
of, will enable us to decline, or baffle
them. Whereas, in Publick, we are
merely Passive to such Impressions; which
strike our Minds so violently, and succeed
each other so fast, that we have no Oppor-
tunity, no Strength, no Inclination almost
to withstand them.

The great Risque which Virtue runs
in Company, is, from the Neighbour-
hood of Ill Examples, which are of so
Contagious a Nature, that, if we live
much amongst them, we shall as surely
be corrupted by them, as he that often
breathes in Ill Air, will at last partake of
the Infection. 'Tis dangerous for the
most Innocent Person in the World to be
too frequently and nearly a Witness to
the Commission of Vice and Folly. Such
Views lessen the Natural Horror we have
for such Actions; and render the Thought
of

of them more Familiar, and less Displeasing to us. Especially, when we are us'd to see Ill Things practis'd by Persons, whom we regard; the favourable Opinion we have of the Doer extends itself to the Action done; and leads us insensibly from seeing to approving, and from approving to imitating. And thus being (the very best of us) prone to do Evil, and Living in the midst of Evil; being attack'd thus from without, and betray'd from within; we are not capable of making an effectual Resistance: The only Refuge, we have, is in Retreat, where we may at leisure correct the Ill Impressions that have been made upon us; and by Diffuse, and Distance, weaken the Force of those Ill Influences which we could not wholly avoid.

Another Advantage which Retirement affords us, is, that it calms and composes all the Passions; those especially of the tumultuous kind; which, while the Busines and Pleasures of Life possess our Hearts, are under a Restless and Violent Agitation. We seldom mix long in Conversation,

seemly versation, without meeting with some

x. Accident that ruffles and disturbs us ; somewhat that plays either upon our Hopes, or our Fears ; our Aversions, or Desires. An Injurious, or Slighting Word is thrown out, which we think our selves oblig'd to resent ; or some Innocent Expression of ours is misinterpreted and resented by Others, and That provokes a Return. Our Enemy comes in our way, and kindles Thoughts of Aversion and Hatred in us ; we look upon those, who are above us in all the Advantages of Life, with Envious Eyes, and with Contempt on those who are beneath us. Thus are we delivered over from Passion to Passion, toss'd and disquieted in our Minds, during the Intercourse we maintain with the World. But when we quit it, and retire, all these Winds are presently laid, and there is a perfect Calm. The Objects, which excite us, being removed, our Appetites also Languish and Die away ; we possess our Souls in Patience and Peace, and enjoy a profound Tranquillity and Rest, the Pleasure of which is great to those

those who are so happy as to have a Re-^s E R M.
dish for it ; and is iuhanç'd by being always ^{x.}
tasted with Innoçence.

Wouldst thou then be free from Envy
and Scorn, from Anger and Strife ? fly
from the Occasions of them ; steal away
from the great Scene of Passion and
Business into thy Privacy, shut the Doors
about thee, *Commune with thine Own Psal. iv. 4*
Heart in thy Chamber, and be still.
There all Animosities are forgotten, all
Pursuits, all Competition cease ; there
all Marks of Distinction are laid aside ; the
Great and the Lowly, the Prince and the
Subject are upon the Level ; equally under
the Eye of one Common Master,
equally desirous of pleasing Him, and
mindless of lesser Interests and Concerns.
There the Vanities and Vexations of this
World are shut out, and the Considera-
tions of another are let in ; and our Soul
enjoys that sweet Contentment and Re-
pose, which it enjoys no where else, on
this side Heaven.

I have hitherto consider'd the Usefulness
of Religious Retreat, with Respect

S E R M. to some Ill Impressions made upon us in

x. Conversation, which it removes: I shall
~~~~ now consider it, as Productive of the Chief Christian Graces and Virtues; in as much as it affords us the best Opportunity of knowing *God*, and our *Selves*, and of taking all the proper Methods to reconcile and approve ourselves to God, which are Consequent upon such a Knowledge. For, tho' it be expedient for every Rank and Order of Men, yet it is more particularly advantageous to Penitents, to go up with our Saviour *into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.*

Job xxii.  
22. "Tis our Duty, and our Privilege, our Chief Honour and Happiness, to be acquainted with *God*; and this Acquaintance can never be made, but, where we divest ourselves of all Other Acquaintance, in our Closets. When we have call'd off our Thoughts from Worldly Pursuits and Engagements, then (and not till then)

are we at Liberty to fix them on the best, the most deserving, and desirable of Objects, *God*; to study his blessed Nature and Perfections, to imprint a filial Awe

of

of him on our Hearts, a lively Sense of s E R M.  
his perpetual Inspection and Presence ; x.  
to abound in all the Methods of Devout   
Application to him, in Acts of Petition  
and Praise, of Joy and Wonder, of Sub-  
mission and Hope, of Love and Affiance ;  
to open all our Wants, and impart all our  
Griefs to him, and to express in the most  
significant manner we are able, our En-  
tire and Unlimited Dependance upon  
him ; till, by often dwelling on such  
Thoughts and Reflections as these, we  
have made them Familiar, Habitual, and  
Natural to us ; and can have as Easy and  
Delightful a Recourse to God, in all Ac-  
cidents, and upon all Occasions, as a Son  
hath to a Belov'd and Loving Parent,  
who, he knows, is at all Times able to  
assist, and ready to receive him : In a  
Word, till we can look up to God in  
Each Step of our Conduct, as the Su-  
preme End and Guide of all our Actions,  
the fix'd Centre of all our Wishes, De-  
sires, and Designs ; till we bring our  
selves to Love Nothing in Competition  
with him, nothing but in order to the

S E R M. Enjoyment of him; and resolve to Do  
x. nothing, and Be nothing, but what we.  
~~~~~ are sure will please him.

Can any thing refine, raise, or ennable our Natures more than such a Conversation as This, which is thus begun, improv'd, and perfected in Solitude? Shall we not think it worth our while, to cease for a time from cultivating Useless and Perishing Friendships with Men, that we may be the more at Leisure, and the better qualify'd, to enter into this Divine Correspondence, which is of the vastest Concern to us, and upon which our Everlasting Welfare depends?

While indeed our Hearts are deeply engaged in the Concerns of this World, we cannot well relish the Pleasures of such a Spiritual Commerce: But, after we have once accustomed and inured our selves to it, we shall find it the most delightful Entertainment of the Mind of Man, pleasing as Light to the Eyes, *sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb.* Sensual Men may make sport with such a Pretence, and call it Enthusiasm, and the

the Product of an Heated Imagination ; s E R M.
but They, that taste the Satisfaction, x.
know it to be real, and would not part ~~~
with it for all the Delights this World
can afford ; and which (in the disparag-
ing Phrase of the Apostle) they *count but* Phil. iii. 8.
as dung, in comparison of the Excellency
of this Knowledge of God, and Christ
Jesus.

As Religious Retirement is a great Means of advancing us in the Knowledge of God, so doth it assist us towards attaining a True Knowledge of Ourselves ; towards searching and trying all our ways, and getting a right Information concerning the State of our Consciences. He that will thrive in his Temporal Affairs, must often balance his Accounts, examine his Gains, and his Losses, and see what Proportion they bear to each other ; consider, where his Conduct may have been faulty in any Respect, and how for the future to rectify it. The same Vigilance and Care is requisite in Relation to our Spiritual Concerns also ; and we can never exert it effectually but in

S E R M. the Closet, where Privacy and Silence

x. Befriend our Enquiries. When the Im-
portunity of Outward Objects ceases,
when the Noise and Avocations of a
troublesome World are at a Distance, we
may enter upon these Searches without
Difficulty, and finish them without Inter-
ruption. We may then look inwards,
and take a Distinct View of what at
Other times passes there unobserv'd ; of
our hidden Inclinations and Averfions,
of the Springs which secretly move us
in all our Pursuits, of the Temptations
that beset us hardest, and most frequently
foil us, of the Ground that we have
lost, or got, in our several Encounters.
And when we are advanc'd thus far in
the Knowledge of ourselves, and of our
Ruling Sins and InfirmitieS, we have taken
the most useful and necessary Step towards
abounding in the Three great Duties of
the Penitent, *Contrition*, *Resolution*, and
Prayer.

Contrition is an holy Grief, excited by
a lively Sense, not only of the Punish-
ment due to our Guilt, (That the Schools
call

call *Attrition*) but likewise of the Infinite Goodness of God, against which we have offended; accompany'd with a Detestation of our Sin, and of ourselves, for the sake of it. At this Act of the Mind Repentance (properly speaking) begins; and this Godly Concern of Heart is rarely attain'd, to be sure, it can never be duly exerted, and improv'd, but 'n private. And, therefore, in the history of St. Peter we may observe, that, as soon as a Conviction of his Guilt had seiz'd him, it is said, that *he went Mat. xxvi. out, and wept bitterly*; he withdrew into a Secret Place, where he might mourn his own Fall with Freedom; where he might feed, and raise up to a due Height the Inward Anguish he felt, and Indulge himself in all the Expressions of sincere Sorrow. The Wounds of Conscience, like other Wounds, though generally receiv'd in Publick, must always be healed in Private: There they may be laid open and searched to the bottom, there the raging Smart of them is best endured, and there suitable Remedies are most

so r. m. easily, and most usefully apply'd; where
x. Leisure, and Rest, Silence, and a Proper
~~~~ Discipline assist the Patient, and promote  
the Cure.

The next Step to Contrition is, *Resolution*, or a firm immutable Purpose of Heart, never more to allow ourselves in that Transgression, which we now abominate, and deplore. And, in order to the forming such a well-weighed and stable Resolution, there must be a calm and clear Foresight of the Difficulties which may attend the Execution of it, and a just Computation of our Own Strength to bear up against them; we must deliberately consider, under what Circumstances the Temptation, against which we are now arming ourselves, hath beset us hardest, and how, for the future, we may best decline them; what Helps and Supports we have by Experience found most useful, and how, in the Day of Trial, we may be secure of them; to what a broken dispirited State of Mind we have already reduced ourselves, by so often and lightly departing from what  
we

we had purpos'd; and, with how much ~~some~~<sup>x.</sup> greater Difficulty, every time that we give way, we recover our Ground. I need not prove to you, that these, and the like Reflections, which are necessary towards our resolving well and wisely, can never be dwelt on, in all their due Compass and Force, but at Leisure, and in Sacred Retirement. Doubtless, the good Psalmist had been some time in his Closset, and on his Knees, when he utter'd those Emphatical Words; *I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed, to keep thy Righteous Judge-*<sup>100.</sup> *ments.*

But of all the Duties of the Penitent, that which Privacy best Qualifies us for, is \* *Prayer*, which it enables us to perform in such a Manner, as is likely to be most prevalent and effectual. Great indeed is the Excellence and Advantage

\* Ταῦτα ἔπειτα εἰς τὸ ἁγῶν αὐτοῖς, προσδέσμων ἡμῶν ὅτι καλὴν ἐίσχυνται μόνοντις, ὅταν ἀνηγγέλουν δίηρ τῷ Θεῷ. Διαὶ τότε σπουδής εἰς τὰς ἱράμας ἀπεστοι, προτερή διανοτατερόντι πελλάσματος τούτων, προσδέσμων ἡμῶν ταῦτα ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς παῖ τῷ ἀπὸ τοῦ τότε θυρῷθετον ἐν τοῖς πυροῖς ἀπεγκένει· ἀποχέεις γάρ μεταξὺ τοῦ ἡρακλεοῦ, παῖ γαλάντη, παῖ λυκίνη, πατέρας πελλαλούσιντον θερόβον πρᾶτος. Chrysost. ad Matt. xiv. 23.

SERM. of Publick Devotions, as they testify

x. our Common Reverence of the Divine  
~~~~ Being, as they are best fitted to implore,  
or to acknowledge Publick Blessings, and
as they excite a Publick Eaulation in the
Breasts of Sincere Worshippers. How-
ever, in some Respects, they must yield
the Preheminence to Closet-Prayer; par-
ticularly in This, That they are not so
well calculated, as That, to procure Ease,
and Repose of Conscience to the Sin-
ner, and to adjust particular Accounts
between God and our Souls. For it is
of special Use to this Purpose, in these
Three Respects; as it affords us the best
Opportunity of being *Fix'd, Fervent,*
and *Circumstantial* in our Addreses to
God.

In the Solemn Service of the Sanctuary,
let us endeavour never so much to pre-
vent *Distractions*, we shall now and
then be sensible of them: Outward Ob-
jects will break in upon our Senses, and
divert the Application of our Minds;
even the Length of the Office, and the
Daily Return of the same Forms, will,
to

to Persons not rightly Qualified and Disposed, occasion Spiritual Languors and Wandrings. And this is not the Case only of Stated Forms ; the same Inconvenience doth, in a much higher Degree, belong to Unpremeditated Prayer ; the Hearers of which must first judge of the Fitness, both of the Matter and the Expression, before they can reasonably join in what they hear. And thus the Novelty of the Phrase, instead of fixing, breaks and divides the Attention of a sincere Worshipper ; his Curiosity indeed may be awaken'd by this Means, but his Devotion is certainly check'd and suspended. Now these Obstacles are all remov'd, these Inconveniences are prevented, when we pray in Private. We are then placed immediately under the Eye of God, which awes us ; but under no Other Eyes, and in the Neighbourhood of no other Objects, which might divert or discompose us : We are at Liberty to employ that Part of our Time in the Performance of this Service, when we find ourselves best disposed for it ;

S E R M. to make Choice of our own Thoughts,

x. and our own Words ; such, as are best suited to our present Necesfities, and De-fires : And what is thus paffing within our selves, we cannot but perceive, and attend to. We may break off from the Duty, whenever we find our Attention flags ; and return to it at a more seasonable Opportunity.

Nor are we capable, at such times, of being more *Fix'd* only, but likewise more *Fervent* and *Inflam'd*. True Religion is ever modest and reserved in its Demeanor, when it appears in Publick ; jealous of doing any thing that may fa-vour of Vanity and Ostentation ; unwilling to allow itself in any such Earneft-ness of Speech, or Singularity of Behaviour, as may call off the Eyes and Ears of Others to observe them : It contents itself, for the most Part, with a Compos'd and Serious Look, with a Simple and Unaf-fected Carriage. But when Publick Regards and Restraints are taken off, the Pious Soul may then let itself loose into the highest Fervors of Zeal, into the freest

Raptures

Raptures of Thought, and into a suitable s E R M.
Vehemence and Warmth of Expression : x.
There is no sort of Holy Address, which  it is not then allow'd to make use of; no outward Signs of Devotion and Reverence, which it may not decently abound in.

There is yet another great Advantage that attends our Private Devotions; They give us Leave to be as Express and *Particular* as we please in our Representations. In the Church, the Sinner and the Saint, Men of all Ranks, Distinctions, and Attainments in Virtue, must join in the same Common Forms: And though each of them may, by a sudden Glance of Mind, adapt the General Words to his own Circumstances; yet one Branch of the Service presses too fast upon another, to admit of any Pause between them. And They, therefore, who lie under the Load of any Particular Guilt, rise not from their Knees with so much Comfort, as they would have done, had they been at Liberty to dwell upon it, and confess it in all its Aggravations. This

Liberty

S E E M. Liberty their Closet, and that alone, can afford them. There they may expatiate as much as they please upon their Wants and Unworthiness : There they may pour out all their Complaints to God, and lay open all their Griefs and Fears, and send up all their Thanks and Acknowledgements : There Importunities are not forbidden, Repetitions are not unbecoming ; but they may persist Knocking till it is Open'd to them, and Asking till they have Obtain'd.

These are some of the many Spiritual Advantages, which the present Hours of holy Recollection, when well employ'd, will be sure to afford us. And God grant, that All of us may, as we have Opportunity and Leisure, so employ them !

Indeed, the greater our Sphere of Publick Action is, the less Time we can allow ourselves to spend in these Religious Exercises ; but still Some of it is due to them, nor can any Secular Cares, or Avocations whatsoever, wholly excuse us from paying it. Our Blessed Lord, we are sure, had very great Busines to transact with

Man-

Mankind, and a very short Time in which ~~s E R M.~~
to finish it; and yet, during his Three ^{x.} Years Conversation on Earth, we find 
him often exchanging the Duties of the Active and Publick State, for those of the Solitary and Private; *sending the Multitudes away, and going up into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.* And we are sure, that in This, as well as Other Respects, *she left us an Example, that we should follow his Steps.*

^a Pet. ii.
^{21.}

To Him, together with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, Three Persons, and One God, be ascrib'd all Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.